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NELSON'S  
HISTORY OF THE WAR  

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VOLUME XVII.





NELSON'S HISTORY  
OF THE WAR. By  
John Buchan.

Volume XVII. From the Opening of the Rumanian  
Campaign to the Change of Government in Britain.

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# NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR.

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## CHAPTER CXVIII.

### THE OPENING OF RUMANIA'S CAMPAIGN.

Rumania's Military Problem—Her Frontier—Transylvania—The Passes—The Danube—The Dobrudja—Her Railway System—The Enemy Railways—The Rumanian Army—Its Weakness—Rumania and Russia—The Rumanian Strategy—Its Justification—Its Defects—The Rumanian Dispositions—Invasion of Transylvania—Immediate Success—Position by 12th September—Von Mackensen's Attack in the Dobrudja—Captures Dobritch, Baltchik, and Kavarna—Fall of Turtukai—Evacuation of Silistria—The Rumanian Rally—Von Mackensen forced back—Von Falkenhayn counter-attacks in the Carpathians—The Fighting at the Vulkan Pass—Bavarians seize Rotherthurn Pass—Battle of Hermannstadt—Extreme Limit reached by Rumanian Second and Fourth Armies—The Ebb begins.

THE Rumanian declaration of war, issued at nine o'clock on the evening of 27th August, was accompanied by an order for a general mobilization. This was no more than a formality to recall officers and men still on leave, and to summon second-line troops to guard the railways. For months mobilization had been in progress, and such strength as Rumania possessed was ready to her hand when, her harvest over, she made the great decision. Next day, 28th



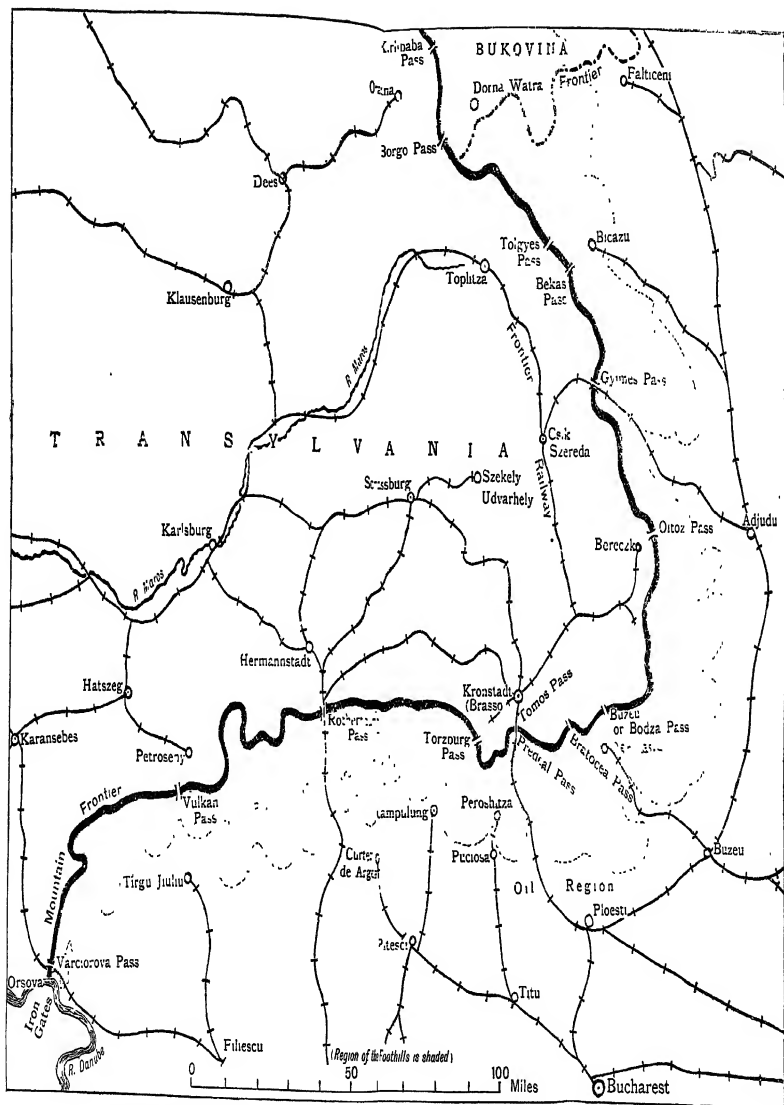
August, at eighteen points her troops had crossed the Transylvanian border.

Before entering on the details of her campaign it is necessary to examine the nature of the military problem now presented to her, and the resources which she possessed to meet it. Her immediate and contiguous enemies were Austria and Bulgaria, and the first point to consider is the nature of her frontier. This frontier fell naturally into three sections. From Dorna Watra in the north to Orsova on the Danube the Transylvanian plateau, rimmed by a line of mountains, jutted out like a huge bastion into her territory, dividing Moldavia from Wallachia. Here the border line, nearly four hundred miles in length, followed for the most part the crest of the hills. The northern part is known as the Southern Carpathians and the southern as the Transylvanian Alps, but it is all one mountain system. On the Rumanian side the heights fall steeply to the wooded foothills, but on the west the slopes are easier towards the plateau. The chief peaks are from 7,000 to 8,000 feet in height, and the passes are for the most part deep winding ravines.

These passes, which were to play a great part in the campaign, are numerous ; but only ten may be considered of military importance. Four of these are on the Moldavian front—the Tolgyes, served by a highway from the Austrian railhead at Toplitza ; the Bekas, traversed by a bad mountain road ; the Gyimes, carrying a road and a railway from Okna in Moldavia to Czík Szereda in Transylvania ; and the Oitoz, with a road from Okna to the head of an Austrian branch line. Of the four all are close







The Passes of the Transylvanian Mountain Frontier (showing the railways traversing them, the Rumanian railheads below them, and the Transylvanian railway system).



to the railway on the Austrian side, but only two have good Rumanian railway connections. At the angle of the salient is the Buzeu or Bodza Pass, with a railhead on the Rumanian side and a good road running to Kronstadt. Going west, follow in order the Bratocea, the Predeal or Tomos, and the Torzburg Pass, all the communications of which radiate from Kronstadt. Of these the chief are the Predeal, which carries the main road and railway from Kronstadt to Bucharest, and the Torzburg, with a good road from Kronstadt to the Rumanian railhead at Kampolung. Further west lies the Rotherthurm or Red Tower Pass, the best in the range, through which run the road and railway from Hermannstadt to Bucharest. It is traversed by the river Aluta, which, rising close to the source of the Maros, the other great Transylvanian stream, flows south and west inside the rim of the salient, and then at the Rotherthurm breaks through the Transylvanian Alps to the Wallachian plains. Last comes the Vulkan, a road pass with a railhead at each end of it. On the Transylvania side it gives access to the mining district of Petroseny and Hatszeg, and on the Wallachian side it opens upon the wide cornlands around Crajova.

From Orsova to near Turtukai, a distance of some 270 miles, the Rumanian frontier was the Danube. From the Iron Gates to the Delta the northern shore of the river is lower than the southern, and, being subject to constant inundations, is for the most part a chain of swamps, lakes, and backwaters. The patches of firm land can be picked out even on a small-scale map by noting the points where a town or village on the Rumanian

shore faces a town or village on the Bulgarian side. These pairs of towns mark the places where for centuries there have been ferries across the river. Several are railheads, provided with wharves and facilities for handling cargo in river traffic. Below Orsova the Danube is rarely less than a mile broad, and on this stretch of frontier it was clear that military operations could not be immediately undertaken.

The last section ran from the Danube to the Black Sea across the arid plateau known as the Dobrudja. To reach it Rumania had the good river crossings at Turtukai and Silistria, and the great bridge of Tchernavoda—the only bridge between Neusatz-Peterwardein in Hungary and the mouth of the Danube. The Dobrudja, which may be regarded as a tongue of the Balkan uplands projecting to the north-east, is a barren steppe of sand-covered limestone, unwatered and treeless. It abuts on various crossings of the Danube delta, and so has for centuries been the gate of invasion from the north, since the Goths and Slavs first swept down upon Byzantium. Those invasions have left their trail upon it, and to-day it is still inhabited by the debris of forgotten races, the flotsam and jetsam of history. Her new frontier, now pushed forty miles southward by the Treaty of Bucharest, gave Rumania a position on the flank of Bulgaria which, if she remained on the defensive, would endanger any Bulgarian attempt to cross the Danube, and, if she took the offensive, might enable her to threaten the main line of communications between Constantinople and Vienna.

Stated, therefore, in geographical terms, the situa-

tion of Rumania in a war with the Teutonic League was that on west and south she was enclosed by hostile territory. The Danube front might for the moment be neglected, and the Dobrudja front seemed safe from any serious attack. The main danger lay in the Transylvania salient. Her frontier there was in the shape of the curve of a capital D, a bad defensive line at the best, and impossible for her to hold strongly with the forces at her command. Her first interest was to shorten it. If she could reach the upright line of the D—a position represented by the central Maros valley between Maros Vasarhely and Broos—she would be safe from any serious enemy counter-offensive, and would be able either to wait with an easy mind on the development of the Russian campaign farther north, or to strike southward against the Ottoman Railway.

But in modern war a strategic position is not determined by geography alone, but mainly by those means of communication through which the industry of man has supplemented nature. In railways Rumania was far behind her enemies. Her own lines had been built largely with Austria's assistance at a time when she was Austria's ally, and at no point had their construction been devised in the light of military needs. The map will show that on the western side of the mountains Austria was well supplied. A number of railways, including four first-class lines, converged on Transylvania. There were sufficient cross lines, and all were linked together by the frontier railway, which curved round the border just inside the mountains, thereby permitting of concentration at any point



for the defence of the passes, while another cross line served for concentration along the Maros valley. Besides the line at the Iron Gates, two good lines ran into the Wallachian plains, and a third into Moldavia. The whole system enabled operations to be conducted on the inside of a curved salient. The defect of the Rumanian system was that there were few lines for through movements; that the branch lines were short lengths ending in railheads near the river or the mountains; that, since most of the tracks were single, traffic capacity was limited; and that, since there was a paucity of alternative routes to any point, traffic backwards and forwards had to be carried on over the one single line. A Rumanian army operating against Transylvania had to use a railway system which in the military sense was entirely on exterior lines, and the length of movement required to reinforce any point was excessive. Whereas the Austrians had a lateral railway between twenty and thirty miles from the frontier, the only lateral connection in Moldavia was fifty miles away, and in Wallachia still farther. From the Predeal Pass to the Rotherthurm Pass troops could be moved on the Austrian side by a railway journey of eighty miles, but the problem for Rumania meant a detour of nearly three hundred.

The situation elsewhere on the border was little better. No railway line could follow the swampy northern shore of the Danube. In the Dobrudja Rumania had the new railway from Tchernavoda to Dobritch; but she had no lateral line, for the main Tchernavoda-Constanza railway was sixty miles inside the new frontier. Bulgaria, on the other hand,

had the Rustchuk-Varna line close at her back for offence and defence. We may fairly say, therefore, that the natural strategic difficulties of Rumania's geographical situation were increased in every theatre by railway communications vastly inferior to those of her enemies.

The second part of her problem was the military strength at her disposal. She had, roughly, half a million of men; but her armies, while containing abundance of good human material, were, except in the older units, imperfectly trained and very imperfectly armed. For two years she had contemplated war; but since she was dependent for new *matériel* on foreign imports by way of Russia, the supply had naturally fallen far short of the demand. The standard of equipment which she had set herself before declaring war had been too modestly conceived. She was desperately short of heavy guns, of aircraft, and of machine guns, and she had no great reserve of ammunition. In every branch of equipment she was far below the level of the Teutonic League. Moreover, she was not rich in trained officers or experienced generals. Few, even of her senior commanders, had had actual experience of war, save as boys in the Russo-Turkish campaign forty years before. She was preparing not for a war of positions, where strong natural and artificial defences may give a chance to the weaker side, but for a war of movement, where skilful leadership and sound organization are all in all. She was entering, moreover, upon a campaign against an enemy who fought largely with his guns, and she had only a trifling artillery to meet the

gigantic "machine" which had now been elaborated through two years of unceasing effort. Her four armies—each no more than a group of half a dozen infantry divisions ill supported by artillery—had to guard an awkward frontier of over seven hundred miles. She could not expect to succeed unless she had the help of her allies in guidance and leadership, in strategical diversions, and above all in equipment. She counted especially on Russia—on Lechitsky's advance in the Carpathians to embarrass the Austrian left wing in Transylvania. She counted, too, on Sarrail's advance in the Balkans to distract the attention of Bulgaria. She counted upon a steady flow of munitions across the Russian border. In all these hopes, as we shall see, she was disappointed. She was left to make her decision, and for the most part to fight her battles, alone.

The blame for the Allies' failure to support Rumania is hard to apportion. Partly it was the fortune of war. Sarrail failed to advance from Salonika, not from lack of good will, but from lack of strength. Lechitsky, in the Carpathians, with an army tired by four months' fighting, could not play the part assigned to him. Russia, at the moment of Rumania's entry, was coming to the end of her mighty effort by sheer exhaustion of men and munitions. It is known that the great soldier who was Chief of the Russian Staff deprecated Rumania's entrance as premature, and in this, as in many other things, Alexeiev was right. When the *débâcle* came, Russia did her best to step into the breach, but the chance of success had long passed. Yet it must be remembered that it was Petrograd

especially which forced King Ferdinand's decision, and on the Government of Russia must rest no small part of the blame for what followed. Light may yet be thrown on dark places, and the intentions discovered of M. Stürmer and his *camarilla*. There were strange tales of consignments of munitions for Rumania side-tracked and delayed by direct orders from Petrograd, and there is some reason to believe that M. Stürmer deliberately planned a Rumanian defeat as part of his scheme for a separate peace with Germany. Such at any rate was the view of General Ilescu and many of the Rumanian leaders. This treason, if it existed, was confined to the civilians, and was wholly alien to the mind of the Russian soldiers. The latter did what they could, but Fate and von Hindenburg were the stronger.

Since, therefore, in the details of the campaign, Rumania followed her own counsels, it remains to consider the wisdom of the strategy she adopted. Assuming that the Allied assistance which she counted on had been forthcoming, was her plan of action the best in the circumstances? During the winter of 1916 she was severely criticized in the West both in military and civil circles, and the criticisms were mainly directed to her initial strategy. What was this strategy, and wherein can we condemn it?

Of her four armies she directed three against Transylvania, with, as their ultimate objective, the central valley of the river Maros. The fourth army was left on the defensive in the Dobrudja, to cover the Bulgarian frontier; and small detachments from it were scattered along the Danube valley to watch

the crossing-places. The Austrian Danube flotilla held all the middle river, and the Rumanian river-craft were unable to leave the lower reaches. Rumania's strategic aim may, therefore, be set out as follows: She stood on the defensive against Bulgaria with small forces, hoping that Sarrail in the south would keep the attention of that enemy sufficiently occupied. With her main armies she aimed at cutting off the Transylvanian salient and holding the line of the Maros—partly, for political reasons, to free her Transylvanian kinsmen; partly to give herself a short and straight defensive line instead of the long curve of the mountain barrier; partly to turn the right wing of the Austrian forces opposed to Lechitsky, and so, in the event of a Russian advance, to prepare a complete enemy *débâcle* in Eastern Hungary.

The current criticism upon her action was that she sacrificed strategy to politics; that, preoccupied with the desire to win Transylvania, she entered it prematurely, when she was too weak to hold it; and that she missed a supreme chance of striking a deadly blow at the enemy by cutting the communications between Germany and Turkey. The proper course, it was argued, was for Rumania to have stood on the defensive in the mountain passes, and thrown her main weight through the Dobrudja against Bulgaria and the Ottoman line.

Such reasoning in the light of after events seems clear and convincing; but the problem which Rumania had to solve in those last days of August was not so simple. Undoubtedly desire to vindicate their decision by the occupation of Transylvania was strong among the members of M.

Bratianu's ministry ; but, leaving this out of account, it is possible to justify the Rumanian plan on military grounds alone. Her main enemy lay on the west, and sooner or later the Austro-German armies would move against her. How was she to hold the long curve of the hills and the many passes with slender forces, with a perfect railway system in front of her, and the worst conceivable at her back ? Every pass can be turned on its flanks, and the German Alpine troops would find a way over the goat tracks.\* For the moment she had a great chance. The enemy was hotly engaged farther north, and there was nothing in Transylvania but a few weak divisions. She had the initiative, and the advantage of surprise ; if she could once reach the line of the Middle Maros she would have won a strong strategical position, far better for defence than the line of the frontier, and she would have the good Austrian railways for her own use. Considered purely as a defensive measure, it seemed wise to cut off the difficult western salient and win a shorter and easier line. Moreover, such a plan might have also a high offensive value. Rumania at the moment believed with the rest of the world that Brussilov's great advance had still far to go. She thought that presently Lechitsky would be across the Carpathians. If that happened, the presence of her troops on the enemy's flank might turn a retreat into a wholesale disaster.

\* The argument is stated as it may have appealed to the Rumanian general staff. But as a matter of fact, with depleted forces the Rumanian army did succeed in holding von Falkenhayn for weeks in the foothills, after he had won the main divide.

On the other hand, she anticipated no danger from the side of the Dobrudja. Sarraill's offensive had been part of the bargain with the Allies, and, even if it did not advance far on the road to Sofia, she believed that it would keep the three Bulgarian armies busily engaged. Further, at first she seems to have even hoped that Bulgaria would refrain from a declaration of war—a political miscalculation in the circumstances not altogether unnatural. In any case, if she had to choose between two dangers, the menace from Transylvania loomed far the greater. To the Western world it seemed as if Rumania at the outset embarked on a rash offensive. It would be truer to say that she thought principally of the best defensive.

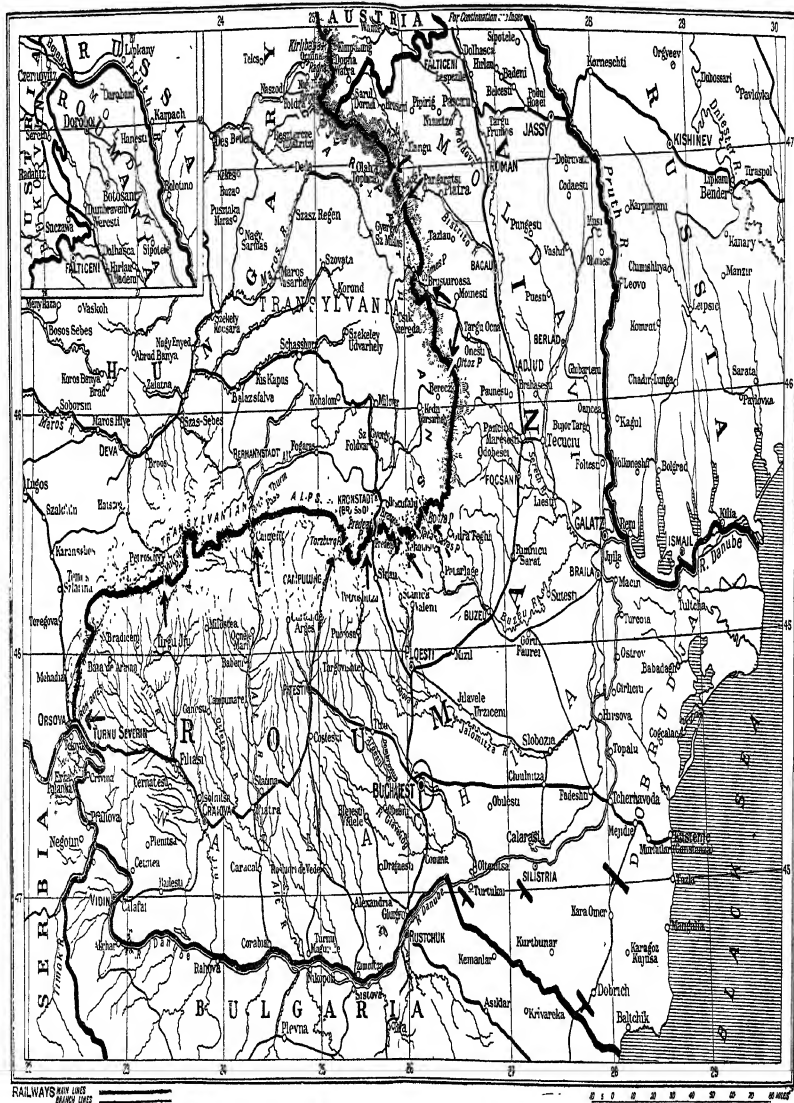
She thought about it too much, and therein lay the secret of her failure. Her plan was not conceived in the general interests of the whole Alliance, but with regard chiefly to her own security. From the Allies' point of view the occupation of Transylvania mattered little; but the cutting of the Ottoman Railway would have struck deep at the roots of German power. Had Rumania played the "long game" she would have risked everything in the west, and struck hard from the Dobrudja at the German highway to the east. It is difficult to believe that she would not have succeeded, and the blow would have altered the whole course of the campaign in Eastern Europe. For her the bold path would also have been the path of safety. "He that saveth his life shall lose it," is a maxim not only of religion but of war.

The breach with Austria found three Rumanian









Rumania and Transylvania, showing the points attacked on the Transylvanian frontier at the outbreak of the war, and the Rumanian position in the Dobruja.



armies waiting to cross the Transylvanian frontier. The First Army, under General Culcer, was the left wing of the invasion, and its front of 120 miles extended from Orsova to east of the Rotherthurm Pass. Obviously half a dozen divisions could not operate continuously on such a front, so the advance fell into three groups—the left against the Orsova-Mehadia railway, the central against Hatszeg by way of the Vulkan Pass, and the right through the Rotherthurm Pass against Hermannstadt. East of the First Army lay the Second Army, under General Averescu, the ablest of Rumanian generals, who had risen from the ranks to be Chief of Staff in the invasion of Bulgaria in 1913, and had later commanded the 1st Corps at Craiova. Averescu's force extended as far north as the Oitoz Pass, and was the main army of assault, whose object was the seizure of the central Maros valley, assisted by the flanking forces on the south. North of Averescu lay the Army of the North, the Fourth Army, under General Presan, whose right wing was in touch with Lechitsky's left in the Dorna Watra region. The Third Army, under General Aslan, guarded the Danube and the Dobrudja frontier.

At the moment the Austrian strength in Transylvania was small—five divisions, under General Arz von Straussenberg. Nor was their quality high, for they consisted partly of Landwehr and partly of troops which had suffered severely in Brussilov's great offensive. The Rumanians, strung out on a 400-mile frontier, and advancing through passes separated often by forty miles of rocky mountain, were obviously in a precarious position against a strong enemy. Their one hope of success was to

break through the feeble resistance speedily, and win their objective before the enemy could gather his supports. If Rumania was to succeed, she must succeed at once, or, with her poor communications and widely scattered units, she would find herself checked on a line where she could not abide.

The Rumanian armies were in motion on the evening of 27th August, and next day were pouring

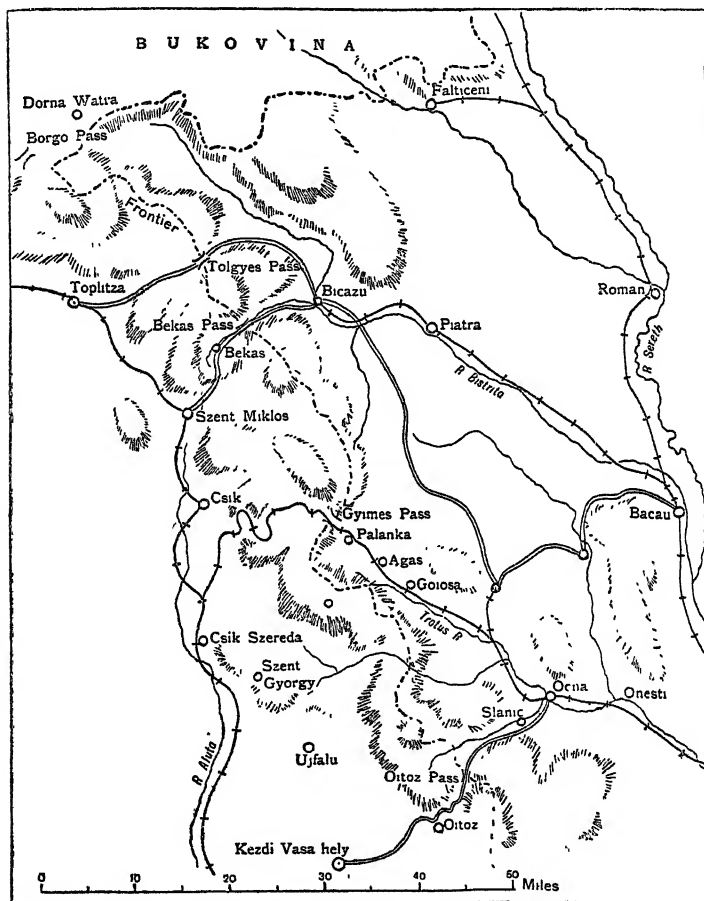
*Aug. 28.* across the passes towards the frontier railway in the upper glens of the Maros and the Aluta. They moved fast, and found little opposition. In the Tomos Pass, a regiment drawn from the Magyars of Transylvania put up some resistance, but was driven in with heavy losses. In the Tolgyes a Czech regiment went over bodily to the invader. During that week the bulletins posted up in Bucharest were cheerful reading. On 29th

*Aug. 29.* August the town of Kezdi Vasarhely, west of the Oitoz Pass, was occupied, as well as Kronstadt, north of the Predeal, and Petroseny, north of the Vulkan. This gave them most of the Upper Aluta valley, and the lands held by the Saxon and Magyar immigrants.

*Sept. 2.* On 2nd September, on the extreme right, General Cottescu, descending from the Tolgyes Pass, occupied the town of Borsok, and sent out cavalry patrols to get in touch with Lechitsky on the Bukovina front. On the 4th the

*Sept. 4.* Rumanians, advancing from the Rotherthurm Pass, were close upon the important town of Hermannstadt. On the same day the advance from

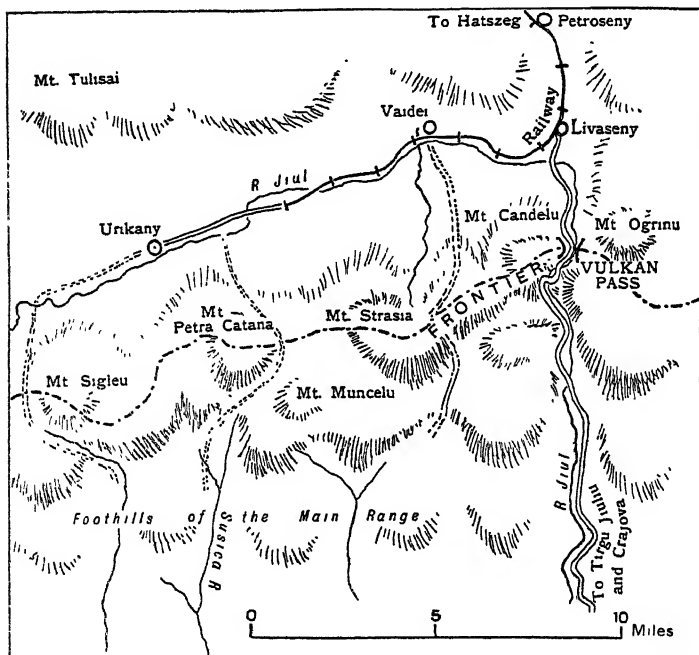
*Sept. 9.* the right over the Bekas Pass reached the frontier railway. By the 9th, from Toplitza southward the whole frontier valley, between



The Passes of the Moldavian Carpathians.

the outer and inner walls of Transylvania, was in Rumanian hands. Next day Hermannstadt was evacuated, and the enemy *Sept. 10.* withdrew to the northern hills. The advance was

slowest just north of the Vulkan Pass, where the defence fought hard for the vital junction of Hatszeg, but by 12th September three-fourths of the distance had been covered by the invader. On the extreme left the 1st Ru-



The Vulkan Pass, and the mountain paths over the range to the west of it.

manian Division, under General Dragalina, had carried the Cerna line, and entered Orsova. Within a fortnight from the declaration of war the Saxon and Magyar peoples of south-eastern Transylvania were in full flight westward ; the invasion had pene-

trated in some places to a depth of fifty miles ; all the passes, the strategic frontier railway, and most of the frontier towns had been occupied, and nearly a quarter of the country was in Rumanian possession.

It was a dazzling success ; but it was fairy gold which could not endure. The enemy had fallen back upon a shorter and safer line, and the real struggle had not begun. The Rumanians, with their armies and groups far apart, and often unable to communicate, were enmeshed in a difficult country of divergent valleys, with many strong positions to take before they reached the comparative security of the Middle Maros. Moreover, the enemy was preparing a deadly counterstroke, though the invaders, with hardly an aeroplane to serve their needs, were ignorant of his preparations. When von Falkenhayn ceased to be Chief of the German General Staff, the Kaiser had announced that he was destined presently to take up an important command. This command was the new Ninth Austrian Army, even now assembling in the Lower Maros valley. It was intended to strike hard at the left of the straggling Rumanian front, and open the passes leading to the Wallachian plain. Another army under von Mackensen was being assembled south of the Danube to clear the Dobrudja of the enemy, and be ready, when von Falkenhayn had stormed the passes, to cross the river and join hands with him in an enveloping movement upon Bucharest. It was a bold and skilful scheme, the true type of that offensive which is the best defence, and it was based upon a correct judgment of Rumania's weakness and Russia's preoccupations. Its success was certain from the moment the main forces of



Rumania were poured across the Carpathians rather than over the Dobrudja frontier.

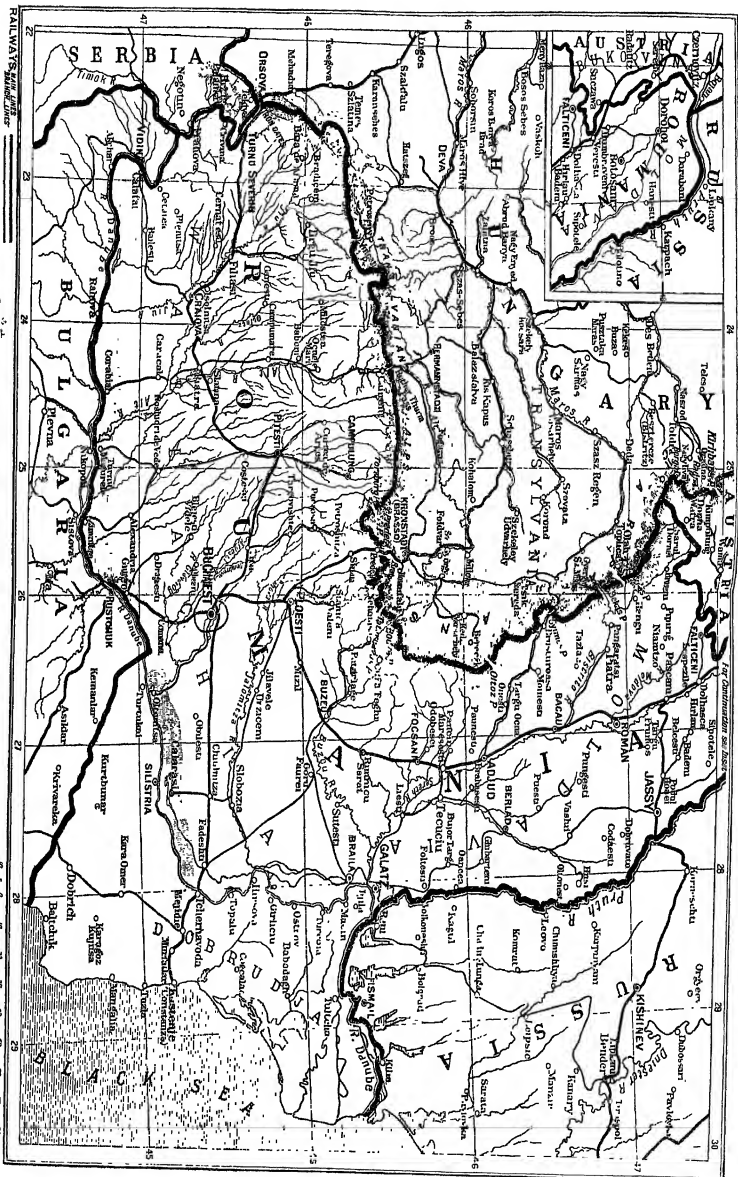
The first move came from von Mackensen. He was in the Balkans when Rumania declared war, and during the four days which elapsed before Bulgaria followed suit he had concentrated his mixed forces with unprecedented speed. He could count on three Bulgarian infantry divisions—the 1st, 4th, and part of the 6th and 12th; two Bulgarian cavalry divisions, and the better part of a German corps,\* while two Turkish divisions were on their way to reinforce him. Above all, he disposed of a far greater weight of artillery than his opponents. The problem before him had the simplicity of an illustration to a staff lecture on strategy. The new frontier in the Dobrudja was 100 miles long. But the Dobrudja narrows as it runs northward, and it is only thirty miles wide where the main line runs from the Bridge of Tchernavoda to Constanza. Every mile he advanced, therefore, made his front shorter. Further, if he could cut off the Rumanian bridgeheads at Turtukai and Silistria, he would get rid of any danger of a flank attack on Bulgaria across the Danube. He would advance with his flanks resting securely on the river and the sea. If he could win the Tchernavoda-Constanza line, he would be master of all the Dobrudja, and would cut off Rumania from any connection with Russia by sea. Finally, the Dobrudja won, he would have a safe starting-point for the passage of the Danube and the flanking movement against Bucharest.

On 1st September Bulgarian troops crossed the

\* The 217th Division and part of the 105th were identified.







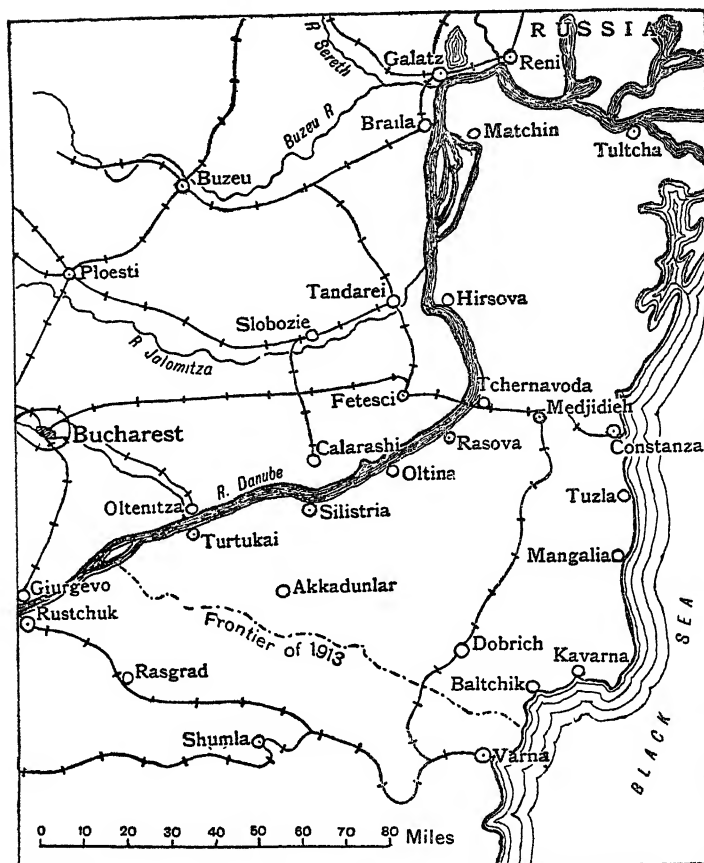
Map showing the extent of ground held by the Austrians in Transylvania about September 19, 1914.



## OPENING OF RUMANIA'S CAMPAIGN. 27

Dobrudja border, striking on the eastern flank against the railway which links Dobritch and Baltchik. The Rumanian frontier guards fell back, and on the 4th the enemy had Dobritch, Baltchik, and Kavarna. This gave von Mackensen a good strategic front on his right, and he immediately proceeded to wheel his left against Turtukai and Silistria. Each of these places was held by an isolated Rumanian division. Had Rumania possessed an adequate air service the perils of von Mackensen's movement would have been discerned, and the divisions withdrawn. But only the German armies had "eyes."

Turtukai was little more than a large village, and owed its importance solely to the ferry across the Danube between it and Oltenitza, which stands on a tongue of hard ground between the marshes of the northern bank and is the starting-point of a road to Bucharest. Since 1913, when it became a frontier post, it had been provided with extensive barracks, and defended by forts and entrenchments. On 2nd September the 1st and 4th Bulgarian divisions advanced from the south against the forts, while a Bulgarian-German force, with heavy guns, came down the river from the west by the Rustchuk road. By the morning of the 5th the place was invested, and that evening an attempt by the general commanding at Silistria to send supports, was easily frustrated. Next day, the 6th, the garrison of Turtukai was compelled to surrender, and 100 guns and the whole of an infantry division fell into von Mackensen's hands. It was a serious disaster for Rumania to suffer on the tenth day of her campaign.



The Dobrudja.

The 9th Division at Silistria, warned by the fate of Turtukai, did not linger. The place  
*Sept. 9.* was evacuated, and on 9th September was occupied by the Bulgarians. Von Mackensen's problem was how to bring up his centre to

## OPENING OF RUMANIA'S CAMPAIGN. 29

the level of his left wing, and to form a front on the line Silistria-Dobritch-Kavarna. This was presently accomplished, and once more he swung forward his left, till on the 11th he held the front Karakioi-Alexandria-Kara Agach. Here the Rumanian resistance stiffened; but the German general pressed on, till, on the 16th, *Sept. 16.* he was in contact with the main Rumanian position a dozen miles south of the Tchernavoda railway, running from Rashova, on the Danube, by way of Copadinu to Tuzla, on the Black Sea.

Rumania, engrossed in her Carpathian advance, had perforce to turn her attention to a menace which she had ruled out as unlikely. She saw her gains of 1913 wiped out, and her communications with her main seaport in jeopardy. The measures she took to meet the crisis showed her bewilderment. Three divisions were hurried eastward from the Transylvanian front, and Averescu was recalled from the command of the Second Army to take charge of the Army of the Danube. The Russian general Zayonchovski was placed in command of the whole defence, and the Russian contingent present included the bulk of the 47th Corps, a cavalry division, and a Serbian division, composed of Jugo-Slavs taken prisoner by Russia, who had asked to be led against the enemies of their race.

The Russo-Rumanian army in the Dobrudja was now concentrated, not so much by any design of its commander as because one of its outlying divisions had been destroyed and two more driven back upon it. The opposing forces were approximately equal in numbers, and the Rumanians were fight-



ing on interior lines with slightly the better communications behind them. This advantage, such as it was, was, however, more than neutralized by the fact that von Mackensen had many more guns and a far greater munitionment.

For the moment the defence proved the stronger. The rolling barrens of the Dobrudja presented no obstacle to movement so long as the weather was dry, and von Mackensen was in a hurry to win his objective before the weather broke. On 16th September he struck with his left against the line Arabi-Cocargea, and for four days there was bitter fighting, during which Zayonchovski held his ground. On

*Sept. 20.* the 20th the latter received reinforcements and opened a counter-offensive against the enemy's right in the neighbourhood of Toprosari, east of the Dobritch-Megidia railway.

*Sept. 23.* By the 23rd von Mackensen was forced back at least ten miles behind the line which he had held on 14th September. It was a fine achievement, and the heroic Serbian division played no small part in it. It is clear that von Mackensen's initial supply of shells had run short, and that in ordinary infantry fighting his men were not the superiors of the defending force. But, as we shall see, he had the means to procure a further stock, and his opponents had none. Had Zayonchovski had reserves to fling in at the critical moment, it is possible that he might have turned the retreat into a rout, pushed the enemy beyond the Dobrudja border, and carried an offensive far into Bulgaria. But his men were weary, and he had no supports. He was compelled to wait on von Mackensen's next move, in the painful knowledge that

though his enemy had failed as yet to attain his main objective, he had forced Rumania to conform to his strategy, had nullified two avenues of communication for a Dobrudja campaign, and had compelled at a critical moment the weakening of the Transylvanian front.

For in Transylvania the skies were already darkening. The two northern armies, indeed, still continued to progress after the middle of September. General Presan's army advanced from the glen of the Upper Maros over the Gorgeny mountains, and approached the Upper Kokel valley, with its important railway line. The Second Army—now under General Crainiceanu—crossed the Geisterwald, and on the 16th took the historic town of Fogaras on the Aluta. But the *Sept. 16.* First Army, now engaged around Hermannstadt and in the Striu valley on the way to Hatszeg, was already feeling the first effects of von Falkenhayn's new concentration.

It was commonly supposed in the West that the Teutonic League, being *accroché* on the Somme and in Galicia, would have no surplus troops for a Rumanian expedition. What von Hindenburg did was precisely what he had already begun to do in the West.\* He took infantry regiments from four-regiment divisions, and battalions from four-battalion regiments. His main trust, now as ever, was in artillery, and on all the fronts, while he kept the guns up to strength, he provided a smaller complement of men. For Rumania he relied mainly on his guns, the service in which his opponents were

\* See Vol. XVI., p. 166.

most to seek ; but he also provided von Falkenhayn with some admirable infantry units. The northern sector, facing the Rumanian Fourth Army, was taken over by the right wing of General Kirchbach's Seventh Austrian Army, and von Falkenhayn's new Ninth Austrian Army\* was free to deal with the Rumanian First and Second Armies. The forces had been concentrated in the Arpad and Temesvar districts of Hungary, and contained, besides Magyar and Austrian troops, at least eight German divisions—the 89th, 187th, 48th Reserve, 76th Reserve, 10th Bavarian, 11th Bavarian, 12th Bavarian, and 8th Bavarian Reserve. It had with it also the Alpine Corps, which had hitherto been with the Imperial Crown Prince at Verdun—men drawn from the Bavarian Highlands, and familiar with every branch of mountain fighting. In all, von Falkenhayn disposed of not less than 250,000 men.

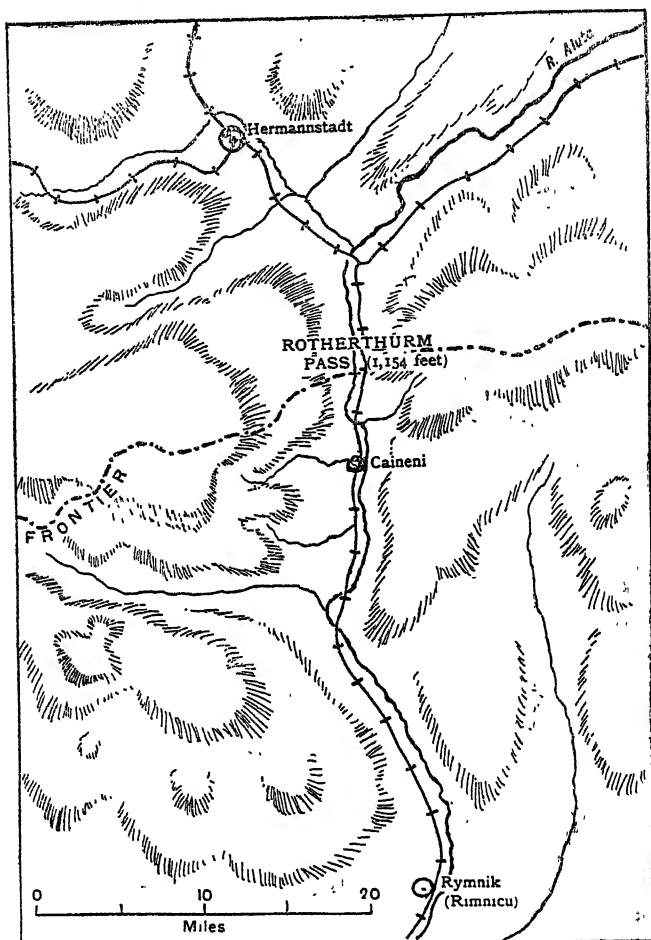
General Coanda, commanding that part of the First Rumanian Army which was operating west of the Vulkan Pass, was getting dangerously near to Hatszeg and the main line from Broos to the Austrian bases ; so on him fell the first brunt of the German counter-attack. He was now astride the Striu valley, on the line Mount Muncelului-Baru

*Sept. 15.* Mare-Barlu, and on 15th September he encountered a German-Magyar force under the Bavarian general, von Staabs. Coanda, after a gallant fight, made a skilful retirement. The Hatszeg range of mountains lay between him and the frontier, and the railway by which he retired

\* This force is referred to in some accounts as the Ninth German Army. But the German Ninth Army was under von Woyrsch, and was now at Baranovitchi.

circled round the eastern end of the range, and then turned south to the Vulkan Pass. Pivoting upon his left at Mount Muncelului, he resisted the effort of von Staabs to outflank him in the Hatszeg mountains, and swung his front round parallel to the frontier. On the 20th he evacuated Petroseny, and by the 22nd his right was back at the Vulkan Pass. That night he counter-*Sept. 20.* attacked, and took many prisoners, while his left, operating from Mount Muncelului, threatened to cut the German railway communications. Von Staabs was forced back to a position astride the Striu valley at Merisor, and his gains of the week were lost. Coanda maintained his ground till the disastrous events farther east compelled him to fall back through the Vulkan into Wallachia.

Von Falkenhayn's main thrust was delivered against the section of the First Army known as the "Aluta Group," which at the moment held a line from Porumbacu in the Aluta valley, by Schellenberg and the heights north of Hermannstadt, to Orlat in the tributary valley of the Sibiu. This, the right of the First Army, was separated by a space of some fifteen miles from the left of the Second Army near Fogaras. Ten miles of rough mountain lay between it and the frontier range; it had no supports in flank, and it had no rearguard to speak of at the Rotherthurm Pass. The position was fated to be turned, and von Falkenhayn grasped the opportunity. He disposed his forces in three columns. The western, consisting of the Bavarian Alpine corps, was directed to cross the intervening hills, and cut the line of retreat through the Rotherthurm Pass; the eastern to march through the gap



The Rotherthurm Pass.

between the First and Second Armies ; and the central to attack in front the line Orlat-Porumbacu.

The Bavarian *jaegers*, under General Krafft von

Delmensingen, started on the 22nd, and, crossing ridges 5,000 feet high, reached the southern base of Mount Cindrelul on *Sept. 22.* the night of the 23rd. After that their path became more difficult, and they had several encounters with Rumanian pickets; but by the 26th they were close to the Rotherthurm *Sept. 26.* Pass. That day they attacked the pass, won both its ends and the adjoining peaks, and cut the railway line from Hermannstadt to Wallachia. They took large quantities of material on its way to the Rumanian forces, and on a rock at the Rumanian end of the pass clamped great letters of iron commemorating their success. It was an operation which for its speed and secrecy well deserved the grandiose memorial.

Had the rest of von Falkenhayn's scheme proceeded with the precision of the part entrusted to the Bavarians, the Army of the Aluta must have suffered complete destruction. His left succeeded in cutting any communication with the Second Army by forcing the passage of the Aluta east of Porumbacu, but it failed to execute a true flanking movement. On the 26th, the day the Rotherthurm Pass fell, the main German force opened a furious bombardment on the Rumanian front at Hermannstadt. The Rumanians were now aware of their imminent danger, and they met the crisis with the spirit of soldiers. Since the Rotherthurm Pass was closed to them, they must retreat south-eastward and cross the frontier range by goat paths and difficult saddles. To cover such a retreat, the rear-guards offered a desperate resistance, and every village was the scene of bitter fighting. Next day

their main force was at Talmesh, and during the following week they fought their way *Sept. 27.* back over the border crest. The Second Army did what it could by an advance west to Porumbacu, and a contingent from Wallachia kept the Bavarians busy in the Rotherthurm Pass. The retiring troops lost heavily, but the amazing thing is that their losses were not greater. The Germans claimed no more than 3,000 prisoners and thirteen guns, and the main booty was laden wagons and rolling-stock intercepted on the Hermannstadt railway. It was faulty generalship which led to the surprise of 26th September, but both leaders and men showed at their best in their efforts to retrieve the disaster. Hermannstadt was an undeniable defeat, but it was never a rout, and the retreat over the range will rank as one of the most honourable achievements in the story of Rumanian arms.

But von Falkenhayn had won his end. He was now free to turn eastward against the flank of the Second Army. Crainiceanu was pushing towards Schassburg in spite of the misfortunes of his western neighbours, and the Fourth Army was moving down the valley of the Great Kokel towards the same objective. These operations were admirably conducted, and had they taken place at the beginning of September instead of at its close, the line of the central Maros would no doubt have been won.

*Oct. 3.* On 3rd October the position occupied was the line Libanfalva-Magyaros-Szekely Keresztar-Henndorf, astride the valleys of the two Kokels, and within a dozen miles of both Schassburg and Maros Vasarhely. It was the high-water mark of Rumanian success in Transylvania, for

on 4th October von Falkenhayn's sweep to the east had begun, and Fogaras was evacuated. *Oct. 4.* The pressure proved irresistible, and the Second and Fourth Armies began to fall back on divergent lines to the frontier, the former towards the Torzburg and Buzeu Passes, the latter towards the Gyimes and the Oitoz.

On 6th October the Bucharest official reports for the first time abandoned their tone of confidence, and announced that "in the south of Transylvania the Rumanian army is re- *Oct. 6.* tiring before superior forces." The retirement was about to become universal. The tide had clearly turned, the invasion had ended in failure, and everywhere, except in the extreme north, Rumania was being forced back to defend her frontier passes. South of the Rotherthurm, indeed, the campaign was already being fought on Rumanian soil.



## CHAPTER CXIX.

### BRUSILOV'S CHECK.

German and Austrian—Brussilov's Dual Aim—Difficulty of Area—Bothmer's Retreat to the Zlota Lipa—Importance of Halicz—Bothmer's New Line—Scherbachev's Struggle for Halicz—Bothmer is reinforced—The Fight for Brzezany—Failure of the Russians—Sakharov's Check in Volhynia—The Carpathian Campaign—Lechitsky fails to break the Defence—Russian Prospects for the Winter.

**S**TANISLAU fell on 10th August, and by the 15th Bothmer's army had drawn back towards the Zlota Lipa. The first two stages of Brussilov's advance had been crowned by a brilliant success. The Russian offensive had, indeed, attained its main object, since two Austrian armies had been shattered, over 350,000 prisoners taken, and little short of a million men put out of action. There remained six weeks of good campaigning weather in which to complete the work begun on the 4th of June by the taking of some enemy key-point like Kovel or Lemberg. The past two months seemed to warrant such hopes, and the approaching entry of Rumania into the war promised a grave distraction for von Hindenburg on his southern flank.

But Germany had not been slow to perceive and prepare against the danger. As we have seen, the

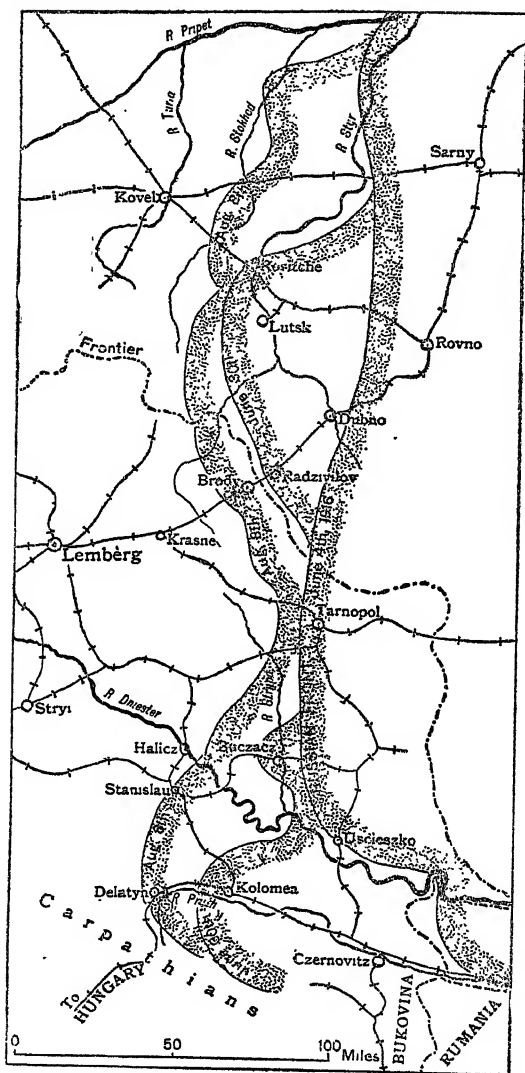
whole of the Eastern commands had been transformed. The *de facto* German control, which had existed since the first day of war, was now formally proclaimed and extended to the smallest details. The Austrian regiments were moved about like pawns on a chessboard, without regard to the wishes of their nominal commanders. They did not complain, for the Prussian handling was efficient, and that of their own leaders had been chaotic. Now, at any rate, they were decently fed, and their transport well organized; but they perceived that they were regarded by their new masters as mere "cannon fodder," and their love did not increase for their "dear Allies." "We are beasts to be sent to slaughter," wrote one Austrian officer. "When it is necessary to attack we go in front. When enough of us are killed, the Germans advance under cover of our dead." But till the moment of need arrived the cannon fodder was well cared for. The Magyar regiments were for the most part brought southward to the Transylvanian front, where they would be defending Hungarian territory from invasion. Everywhere along the depleted Austrian line German troops were introduced, and the German commanders, even when they had only divisional rank, became the true directors of operations. For the most part Austrians were left in charge of the corps, and from the Pripet Marshes southward all the army commanders, with the exception of Bothmer, were Austrians. But both corps and army had ceased to be important units. The true field units were now the divisions, and we find, as on the Western front, that groups of divisions tended to replace the old corps, and groups of armies the

old armies. Almost every group commander was a German, and it was with von Linsingen, von Bothmer, and von Falkenhayn that there lay the direction of the Eastern campaign.

Brussilov's main objective in August was two-fold—to push towards Lemberg, and to fling his left wing beyond the Carpathians so as to keep touch with the right of the now imminent Rumanian advance. This dual aim meant a dislocation of his offensive front, for there could be no strategic relation between the Carpathian campaign and that north of the Dniester. Accordingly we find Lechitsky's Ninth Army definitely assigned to the Carpathian area, and given a south-west alignment, while Scherbachev extended his left across the river, and took over the whole Dniester front. The battleground for Russia had become two self-contained terrains, where the forces in one could render no assistance to those in the other. Had Lechitsky's aim been merely to form a defensive flank it would have been different, but he had a heavy offensive duty laid upon him. It is in this inevitable divergence of purpose that we must look for the cause of the check which Brussilov's advance was presently to suffer. Russia was approaching the limits of her accumulation of reserves and munitions, and could not sustain at the old pitch two campaigns conducted in two wholly distinct areas. If Brussilov had been able to concentrate his main energies on the movement towards Lemberg he might well have succeeded; if he had remained idle on the Zlota Lipa and put all his force into the Carpathian attack he might have turned the enemy flank in Transylvania, and frustrated von Falkenhayn's march on

Bucharest. But in the middle of August the situation was still too obscure to allow Alexeiev to forecast the true centre of gravity, and Scherbachev was committed to the advance on Halicz before the importance of the Carpathian flank had revealed itself.

We left the army of Bothmer with the main feeders of its right wing cut by Lechitsky, and with Scherbachev across the Zlota Lipa north of Nizhniov, and so threatening to turn its flank. Brussilov's new position north of the Dniester was now well established. His right wing on the Stokhod and his hold on Brody safeguarded his flanks in Volhynia, while in the south he had the Dniester itself to cover his swing towards Lemberg. He had three railways along which to advance—that from Tarnopol by Zborov and Krasne, that by Brzezany, and that by Halicz—all three converging on the Galician capital. It was his aim to strike at Halicz and Brzezany, while at the same time the army of Sakharov pushed south-westward from Volhynia against the northern side of Bothmer's salient. The immediate key-point was Halicz, the importance of which depended upon a number of quite different reasons. The town stood on the right bank of the Dniester, commanding the chief road-bridge in that neighbourhood. The Stanislau-Lemberg railway crossed the river at Jezupol, a few miles farther down. If Halicz fell, then the southernmost of the lines running east from Lemberg was lost for the purpose of Bothmer's retirement, and, moreover, the valuable lateral line up the valley of the Narajovka would be rendered useless. Again, the westernmost of the river ravines running south



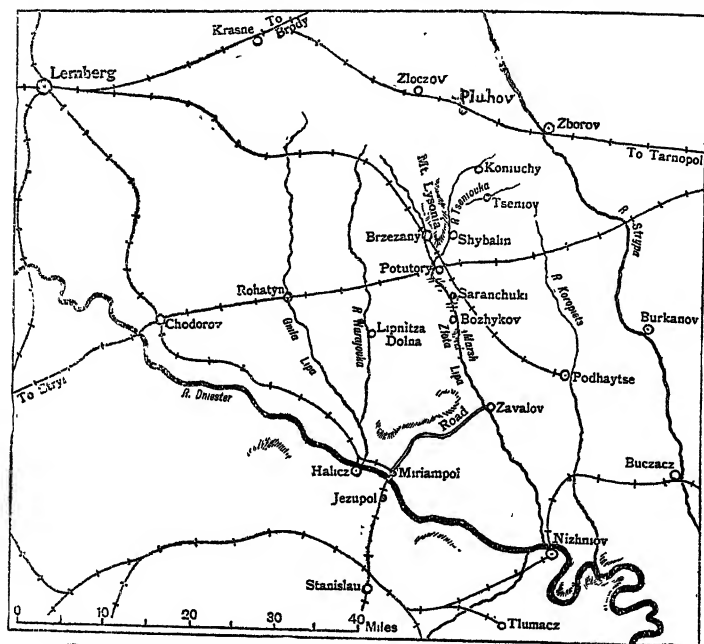
Map showing the Russian front at the beginning of the Offensive (June 4th, 1916), and the ground gained up to the end of June and up to the end of the first week of August.

to the Dniester was that of the Gnila Lipa. The loss of Halicz meant that this, the last strong defensive position before Lemberg was reached, would be turned on its right flank. Finally, Halicz was an important depot where large stores had been accumulated, stores which could not be easily moved in the disorganization of a general retreat. If Lemberg was to be saved it was clear that Halicz must stand.

Under Scherbachev's pressure Bothmer fell back from the Strypa towards the Zlota Lipa, twenty miles to the west. His position was curious, for while his centre and left were on a straight line, his right was bent sharply back, since the Russians, assisted by Lechitsky's advance south of the river, had crossed the Koropiets by 8th August, *Aug. 8.* and were over the Zlota Lipa close to its junction with the Dniester by 11th August. On the 13th they had taken Miriampol, some ten miles from Halicz itself. Elsewhere Bothmer's retirement was more leisurely. The Russian right was at Tseniov on the 13th, and *Aug. 13.* the centre not far from Zavalov. They had marched fast so long as their route lay over the treeless plateau just west of the Strypa, but the country became more formidable as they approached the broken hills and the forests around the Zlota Lipa. Moreover, Bothmer had fallen back upon a prepared position, and had received large reinforcements for its defence.

By 20th August, when his retreat had definitely halted, Bothmer's fifty-mile front lay *Aug. 20.* from south of Zborov, in the north, to the Dniester, east of Halicz. On his left, across the

Tarnopol-Krasne railway, lay the right wing of Boehm-Ermolli's Second Army, under General von Eben. Bothmer lay from Koniukhy along the river Tseniovka to the Zlota Lipa, at the important junction of Potutory—a line of marshy valley supported



Brussilov's Operations in the Halicz-Brzezany District,  
August and September 1916.

by the hills, half crag, half forest, which protected Brzezany on the east. Thence he continued down the broad, swampy vale of the Zlota Lipa to Zavalov, where his position was on the hills on the eastern bank, with Scherbachev in close contact. South of Zavalov, the German-Austrian wing bent back at a

sharp angle to form a defensive flank with the Dniester, for all south of that the Zlota Lipa line had gone. The front in this area roughly followed the wooded hills south of the Zavalov-Halicz highway, and reached the Dniester a little west of Miriampol.

Scherbachev's great effort began on Tuesday, 29th August. He struck first against von Gerok, who commanded Bothmer's right centre at Zavalov, and by the evening had pushed him off the hills east of the Zlota Lipa, and forced him across the river. Next day the Russian left came into action towards the Dniester, and for four days the battle raged on a fifteen-mile front from Nosov to Miriampol. On Sunday, 3rd September, the enemy's resistance broke. Jezupol with its railway bridge fell to the Russian extreme left, and there was desperate fighting among the wooded hills south of the Halicz-Zavalov highroad. Late in the day Bothmer's defensive flank was pierced, with the result that the whole of his right and right centre had to retreat in some confusion. The Russian cavalry were sent in, and over 4,000 prisoners were taken. Next day, 4th September, the Russian centre forced the passage of the Zlota Lipa, routing a Turkish division at Bozhykov, while in the south the railway between Jezupol and Halicz was taken, and the banks of the Gnila Lipa reached. Bothmer had now a singular line. He still possessed the town of Halicz, but not the station on the north bank of the Dniester. Thence his front followed the valley of the Narajovka to Lipnitsa Dolna, and then struck almost due east



across wooded hills to Saranchuki, on the Zlota Lipa. North of that it followed the valley of the Tseniovka to Zborov and Pluhov. The Russian drive towards Halicz had thus made of Brzezany a fairly pronounced salient, a sub-salient, so to speak, or under feature of the greater salient formed by Sakharov's possession of Brody and Scherbachev's position outside Halicz.

The situation was critical, and reinforcements were hurried up to Bothmer's front. He got back what was left of the 3rd Guard Division (the "Cockchafers," who had formerly been in his command), and two other German divisions from the Somme, while his Austrian troops were also added to, so that presently his army was stronger than it had ever been since its creation—seven German divisions and fragments of two others, three and a half Austrian, and two Turkish. Moreover these divisions had mostly been brought up to strength, so that the fifty miles of front were held with not less than a quarter of a million men—a density familiar in the West, but novel in the looser fighting of the Eastern battleground.

Meantime Scherbachev's right had begun its struggle for Brzezany. On Friday, 1st September, *Sept. 1.* he attacked the village of Shybalin, on the east bank of the Tseniovka, some half-dozen miles from Brzezany, and the battle extended south past the junction of Potutory. Between the Tseniovka and the Zlota Lipa stood a ridge called Lysonia, which dominated Brzezany.

*Sept. 2.* On 2nd September the Russian guns bombarded the enemy position on this height, and played havoc with the crumbling out-

crops of rock which lined the crest like a South African *kranz*. Next day the infantry attacked across the Tseniovka, and carried the ridges which the artillery had rendered *Sept. 3.* untenable. For a moment it looked as if Brzezany must fall. But the place was too vital for the Germans to relinquish it, and a counter-attack by fresh Bavarian troops early on the morning of 4th September won back most of the Lysonia *Sept. 4.* crest. The Russians remained west of the Tseniovka, but they no longer held the high ground. In the four days' fighting they had taken nearly 3,000 prisoners. Then during the rest of September the battle stagnated, though Potutory fell into Russian hands. It was a clear stalemate; both sides were so evenly matched that progress was permitted to neither.

On 5th September Scherbachev made a bold bid for Halicz. He strengthened his hold on the west back of the Gnila Lipa and the adjacent *Sept. 5.* northern shore of the Dniester. Both-mer's right wing fell back, blowing up the Halicz bridge, and the town itself was cleared of military stores, and the civil population evacuated. But no progress was possible in this direction until the German centre on the Narajovka was broken. On 7th September Scherbachev had crossed the *Sept. 7.* Narajovka south of Lipnitsa Dolna, winning a height on the west bank. His position there now formed a sharp salient, which it was the endeavour of the Russians to enlarge and the Germans to destroy. All through September and well into October attacks and counter-attacks continued incessantly on the line of this little river. There von

Gerok with the " Cockchafers " held out stubbornly, and the Russian attack, though gallantly sustained, was unable to make any real progress. The third stage of Brussilov's offensive perished in the early days of October from sheer inanition. It had no longer the weight of artillery and trained reserves to succeed.

The failure of the Podolian campaign made fruitless Sakharov's supplementary thrust from Volhynia. It was directed south-westward from the Sviniukhy-Bludov line on a front of some six miles in a district of forests and marshy valleys. Ground

*Sept.* 1-20. was gained in the first fight on 1st September, and in the second main action of 20th September. But Scherbachev's check made its success difficult, and deprived of strategic value even such advance as was made. October saw the Volhynian terrain reduced to the stagnation of the Halicz front.

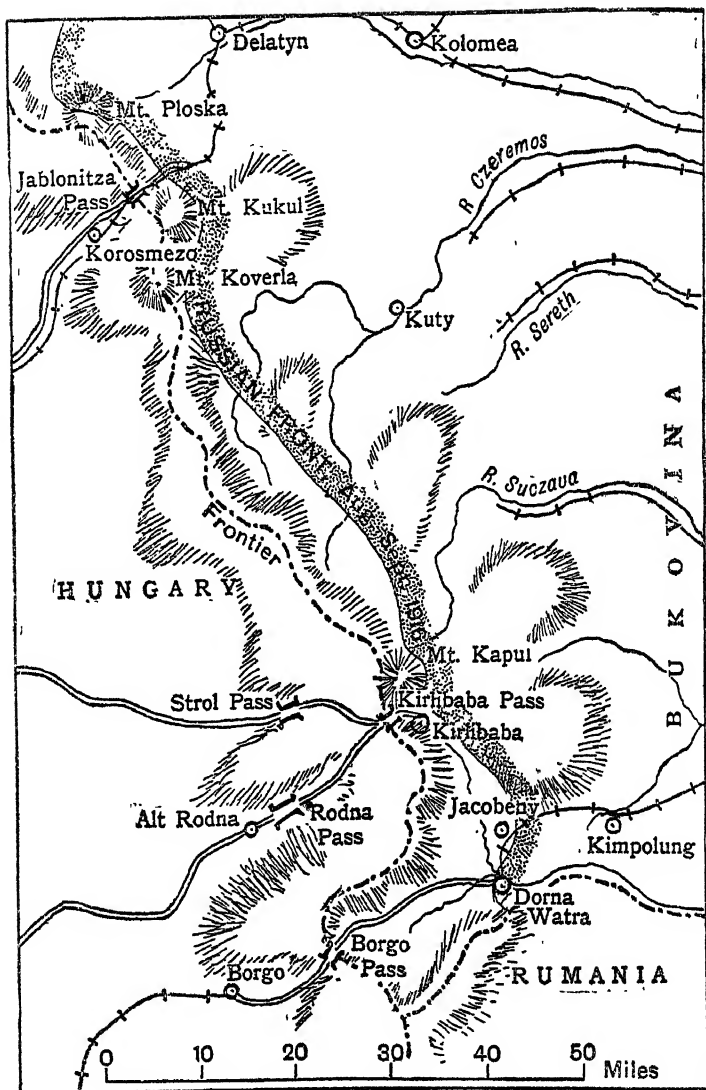
There remains the final section of this third phase of Brussilov's offensive—the Carpathians, where Lechitsky faced the Austrian Third Army under von Koevess and the Austrian Seventh Army under von Kirchbach.\* The entry of Rumania gave this area a very real importance, but Russia, deeply involved farther north, was unable, as we have seen, to increase her forces there to the strength which the strategic position demanded. On 15th August the

*Aug.* 15-17. crest of the Jablonitz Pass was won, and by the 17th the Russians were hold-

\* This von Kirchbach was an Austrian, and must be distinguished from the German von Kirchbach who commanded a group on the Somme.

ing part of Mount Kapul and the Kirilibaba Pass, at the southern apex of the Bukovina. The accession of Rumania on 28th August gave Lechitsky a new orientation, and henceforward his main efforts were directed against the *Aug. 28.* passes of the Eastern Carpathians in order to co-operate with his allies. His front extended for nearly one hundred miles from north of the Jablonitzza to Dorna Watra. It is impossible to describe in detail this mountain warfare, which resolved itself largely into separate contests for the different passes and *massifs*. At first it went well. Between 30th August and 6th September Lechitsky reported the capture of 15 officers, 1,889 other ranks, 2 mountain guns, and 26 machine guns. On *Sept. 11.* Monday, 11th September, his left in the Dorna Watra region got into touch with the Rumanian right. On that day, too, Mount Kapul was carried in its entirety, a peak 5,000 feet high above the Kirilibaba Pass, and nearly a thousand prisoners were taken. During these days the Rumanians were pouring into Transylvania, and about the 22nd had reached the furthest limit of their advance. Lechitsky formed their defensive flank; but he could do little more, for about the middle of September the snow began to fall and crippled his movements among the high peaks, and he had never that superiority in men and guns which would have allowed him to win the western debouchments of the passes and drive down on the left rear of the Austrian defence in Transylvania.

When the tide of Rumanian invasion turned, and von Falkenhayn began his sweep across the Carpathians, Russia's position in the theatre of her



The Attack on the Carpathian Passes.

summer triumphs, while safe against attack, did not promise any further success in the near future. Scherbachev was held at Halicz, on the Narajovka, and opposite Brzezany, and the offensive in Volhynia had come to nothing. Lechitsky had captured various outlying parts of the mountain barrier between Hungary and the Bukovina, but he had not broken the defence. Germany's immense effort had for the moment closed the gaps in that Austrian front which in July had seemed to be crumbling.

Russia entered upon the winter with very different prospects from those which had faced her a year before. Then she lay weary at the end of her great retreat; now she had behind her a summer of successes which, if they fell short of her hopes, had yet inflicted irreparable losses upon her enemies, and had proved conclusively that, given anything like a fair munitionment, she could break the front of the invader. The grandiose schemes proclaimed a year before of the capture of Petrograd and Kiev and Odessa had faded out of the air. She was secure on her front, and needed only a period of recuperation, during which she could complete the training of her reserves and accumulate supplies of shells, in order to resume her deadly offensive. As before, her problem centred in munitions. There was still no easy way of access for these from her Western Allies. Archangel was still the neck of the bottle, though the new Murman line from the ice-free port of Alexandrovsk was in sight of completion, and she had enormously increased her domestic production. But her moral gains were conspicuous, and her troops had won a complete confidence in themselves and their commanders. Their resolution

on the defensive was now supplemented by that assurance of prowess in attack which is necessary to produce the true fighting edge.

There were, indeed, two dark spots in her outlook. The success of the summer had weakened that political unanimity which had characterized the dark days of the Retreat. Reactionary elements appeared in the ministerial appointments, and the Duma and the Government drew apart. The omens in Russian internal politics in the autumn of 1916 were not propitious for a harmonious winter. In the second place, it was clear that Germany would struggle desperately to put Rumania out of action, and to make her share the fate of Serbia and Belgium. Succour could come only from Russia, for the Allies at Salonika were too weak and too far away to affect the situation. In that event Alexeiev might find himself involved in a defensive campaign in Wallachia and Moldavia—a campaign which lay outside his plans—and would spend in a barren terrain the strength which he wished to reserve for the spring advance. Germany might follow on the Eastern front the policy which in the spring of 1915 she had followed in the West, and the line of the Rumanian Sereth might play the part of Verdun.

## CHAPTER CXX.

### VON FALKENHAYN CROSSES THE CARPATHIANS.

Beginning of Rumanian Retreat—Retreat of the Second and Fourth Armies—Change in Rumanian Commands—Von Falkenhayn's Plan—The Defence of the Central Passes—Lechitsky extends his Front—Von Mackensen's Advance in the Dobrudja—Fall of Tchernavoda—Arrival of General Sakharov—The Campaign on the Aluta—Loss of Vulkan Pass—First Battle of Targul Jiu—Second Battle of Targul Jiu—Break up of Rumanian Defence in Western Wallachia—The Aluta Line abandoned—Von Mackensen crosses the Danube—Fall of Piteshti—Loss of Orsova Division—The Line of the Argesch—Presan's Counter-Attack—The Forts of Bucharest—Fall of Bucharest—Destruction of the Oil Region—Von Falkenhayn enters Ploeshti—Position of Rumanian Army—Achievement of Rumania in the Retreat.

THE check to Brussilov's advance, more especially the unsuccess of his left wing, was soon to be followed by disastrous consequences to the Rumanian offensive. If Bothmer and Kirchbach could hold their opponents among the Dniester cañons and the Carpathian defiles, the way was clear for von Falkenhayn to force the weak armies of the invader back over the mountains, and to use the awkward strategic position of the country for a crushing counter-attack. We have seen that the situation on 3rd October might be regarded as the high-water mark of Rumania's success. *Oct. 3.* Thereafter the decline began, like the thaw of a snowfield in spring—a slow shrinkage



and declension, which grew quicker as it neared the day of cataclysm.

At first von Falkenhayn's counter-thrust was well parried. As the enemy pushed against the left flank of the Second Army, Crainiceanu fell back from

*Oct. 4.* Fogaras on 4th October, his line of retreat being towards Kronstadt and the Torzburg, Predeal, and Buzeu Passes. The Fourth Army, with its left wing now at Szekely-Udvarhely, must inevitably lose connection with the Second, for its route of retirement was the eastern passes leading into Moldavia. On the night of 5th

*Oct. 5.* October the Geisterwald was lost, and the left wing of Crainiceanu's army was forced back to the frontier mountains. On the 7th the enemy

*Oct. 7.* were in Kronstadt, though the place was not finally evacuated without some stubborn street fighting by the Rumanian rearguards. Three days later the Rumanian Second Army was everywhere back at the Transylvanian gates of the passes. Presan's Fourth Army, though much less hardly pressed, was compelled to conform, and on the same day stood close to the frontier on the upper streams of the Maros and the Aluta.

The great adventure was over, and Rumania was now to be forced to a desperate defensive. She had taken over 15,000 prisoners during her six weeks' attack, but beyond that had gained nothing; while the strength of her half-trained soldiery had been gravely tried by the Transylvanian raid. Bad as her intelligence system was, she had by this time some inkling of the strength and of the intentions of the enemy, and she braced herself resolutely to meet them. Averescu was recalled from the Dobrudja, and

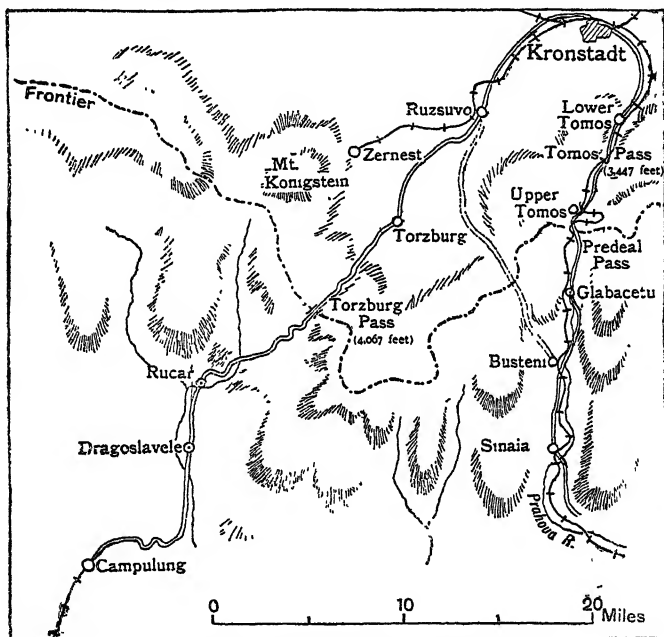
placed again at the head of the Second Army, which had imposed upon it the most critical part of the frontier defence. General Culcer, commanding the First Army, was replaced by General Dragalina, who had distinguished himself in the Orsova section. Moreover, General Berthelot had arrived in charge of a French Military Mission to supply the Rumanian General Staff with advice based on a long understanding of German methods in war.

There could be no hesitation in von Falkenhayn's mind about the exact nature of the task before him. He had to drive his enemies back to their borders, and regain control of the border railways. That done, he would be on the inside of a curve of 300 miles with a dozen passes to choose from, and able to reinforce rapidly his troops at every point ; while his opponents, with slender forces and no good communications for a sudden concentration, would have to watch all the inlets and string their armies along the outer line of the Transylvanian salient. Moreover, there was von Mackensen in the Dobrudja, held tight for the moment, but likely, as the stress in the west increased, to free himself from his difficulties, and win a line which he could hold lightly, thereby releasing his main troops to cross the Danube and take Rumania in flank. Once Rumania had failed to occupy the central Maros valley, and von Falkenhayn's Ninth Army had taken the field, it was obvious that the Austro-Germans had all the cards in their hands. The only drawback lay in the weather. Snow had begun to fall in the Carpathians before the end of September, and it was possible that winter in the mountains might interfere with the transit of the great guns and their

full munitionment. What was to be done must be done quickly.

To win a complete victory at the earliest possible moment it was necessary to force the passes in the centre of the arc of frontier—the passes, that is to say, between the Torzburg and the Buzeu. If that had been achieved and the railway junctions of Ploeshti and Buzeu seized, Rumania would have been split in two, Wallachia would have been separated from Moldavia, and the Rumanian First Army and a large part of the Second would have been cut off. It would have given von Falkenhayn the great oil region before it could be destroyed, and the Wallachian harvest before there was time to remove it. He therefore began by driving hard against the passes south of Kronstadt, while von Mackensen supported him by an advance in the Dobrudja. The Rumanian Staff were alive to the danger. As we shall see, they successfully held the eastern outlets of the central passes, and when the line gave way it was farther west, where, serious as the consequences were, they were less disastrous than those which would have followed upon an early debouchment from the Torzburg and Predeal Passes. But, gallant as the defence showed itself, it was doomed from the start. It might avert the worst results, but it could do no more than play for time. For a strong concentration, if it held the central passes, involved the weakening, or at any rate the inability to reinforce, the defence in north-western Wallachia. The gates into Rumania were opened when, towards the close of September, her troops came to a standstill far beyond her borders before they had reached the only objective that spelled security.

We have seen that south of Kronstadt three chief passes, the Torzburg, Predeal, and Buzeu, and two lesser ones, the Altschanz and Bratocea, open into the Wallachian foothills. These passes are narrow defiles, and on the Wallachian side it is many miles before the glens of the rivers, bounded by steep,



The Torzburg and Predeal Passes.

pine-clad hills, open out into the plains. For obvious reasons it was necessary for the Rumanians to fight as near as possible to their railheads, so they did not attempt to stand on the main divide, but had their principal defensive positions nearer the southern debouchments. With the loss of many

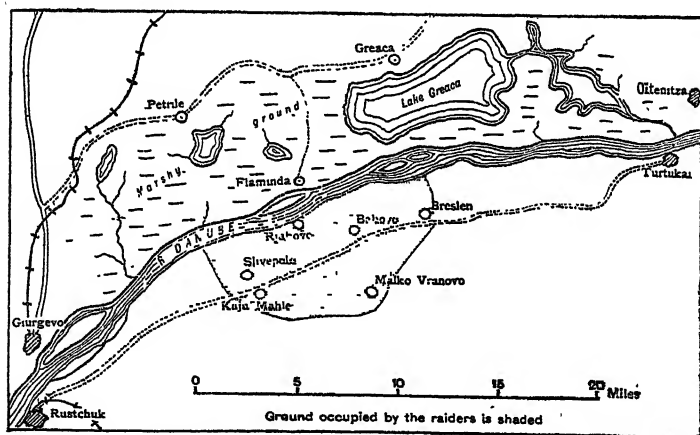
prisoners and a few guns, by the middle of October they had been forced back through most of the passes. The first blow was delivered at the Torzburg.

*Oct. 14.* By 14th October the defence was at Rucar, on the main road from Kronstadt to Kampolung, six miles inside the frontier. Here the enemy, failing to force the road by a frontal attack, devoted himself to outflanking movements by the subsidiary valley of the Dambovitza on the east, and Lireshti on the west. He made no progress, and the Rumanians stood firm in front of Kampolung, on the line Lireshti-Dragoslavele. Farther east, the railway pass of the Predeal was the scene of bitter fighting. The frontier ridge was won by von Falkenhayn as early as 14th October, and the border town of Predeal was destroyed by shell fire.

*Oct. 25.* It fell on 25th October, and, fighting for every mile, the Rumanians—the 2nd Corps from Bucharest—fell back through the wooded glens towards the summer resort of Sinaia. In this section the defence was especially brilliant, and by the first days of November the enemy, though he had carried the main range and some of the lateral foothills, had not advanced more than four miles inside the frontier. Meantime Presan and the Fourth Army were holding with equal resolution the gates of Moldavia. He had been compelled to divide his forces into two detachments, one watching the Bekas and Tolgyes Passes and the routes to the Upper Bistritza valley, and the other holding the railway pass of Gyimes and the subsidiary Uz and Oitoz Passes, which give

*Oct. 17.* access to Okna. The first assaults failed to carry the last-named passes, but by 17th October

the enemy was through the Gyimes and some seven miles inside the frontier down the Trotus valley. There he was held and driven back, and by the first days of November had made no headway in this section. Farther north Presan's right wing was no less successful. It held the frontier between the Tolgyes and the Bekas, till it was relieved in early November by an extension southward of Lechitsky's left. From that date the



The Rumanian Raid across the Danube.

Rumanian front was bounded by the Gyimes Pass, and the defence of north-west Moldavia was handed over to that stubborn Russian corps, under Count Keller, which had been the spearhead of Lechitsky in the summer campaign in the Bukovina. Its counter-attack drove the enemy back across the Tolgyes, and in this section regained the initiative.

Meantime a serious situation had begun to develop in the Dobrudja. We have seen that by

24th September von Mackensen's advance had been checked, and he had been driven

*Sept. 24.* south some fifteen miles from the line Rashova-Tuzla. There for nearly a month little happened. At one or two points the Rumanians pushed the enemy farther back and took prisoners, and there was an attempt by each side to cross the

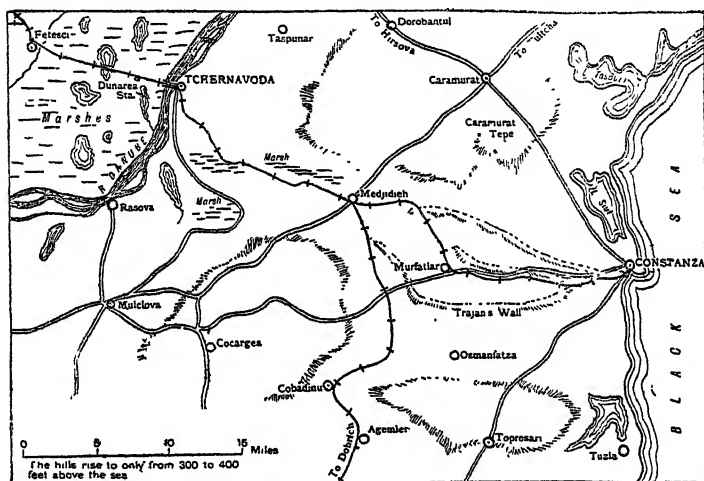
*Sept. 30.* Danube. The German effort was made on 30th September at Corabia, a port and railhead on the Rumanian bank of the Danube, some miles west of the point where the Aluta enters the main stream. From Corabia a railway runs north by the Rotherthurm Pass to Hermannstadt. The port was bombarded and a few small craft sunk, but the landing came to nothing. It was probably intended only as a raid. The Rumanian attempt

*Oct. 2.* two days later was more ambitious. It took place at Rjahovo, a little east of Rustchuk, where there is an island on the north side of the river. Some fifteen battalions crossed—too large a force for a mere reconnaissance—and occupied several villages and a tract of land some ten miles wide and four deep. The attacking force was weak in artillery, and, being assailed on both flanks, it was driven back across the river with considerable loss. By the middle of October the pressure on the western frontier precluded all hopes of a Russo-Rumanian offensive in the Dobrudja.

But von Mackensen had not been idle. He had received large reinforcements of guns and munitions, and had got two new divisions from Turkey and

*Oct. 20.* one from Pomerania. On 20th October, after a heavy preliminary bombardment, he resumed the offensive, especially against the

Rumanian left. Tuzla fell on that day, and next day the central position of Toprosari was evacuated, while von Mackensen's right pushed within six miles of Constanza. On the railway the Rumanian right-centre was driven back from Copadinu, and before night fell the Tchernavoda-Constanza railway had been cut some twenty miles from the coast. Constanza, bombarded on



Scene of the Battles for the Tchernavoda-Constanza Railway.

flank and front, could not be held. On the 22nd its evacuation began, and its stores of oil and wheat were burned. Under cover of the fire of a Russian flotilla in the Black Sea the Rumanian troops withdrew, and in a wild rainstorm Bulgarian cavalry entered the place on the 23rd. They found little booty except some hundreds of empty railway trucks and a few locomotives. But Rumania had

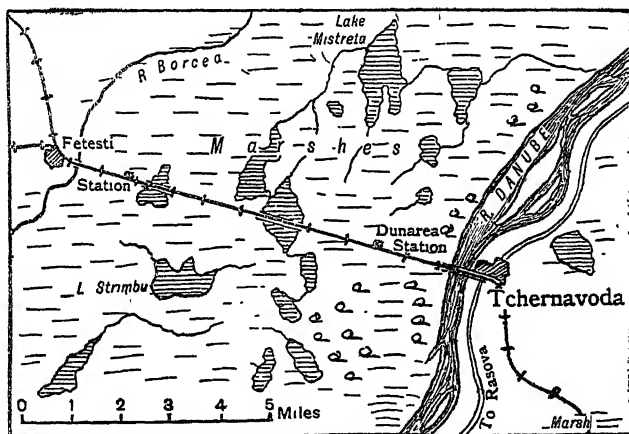


lost her principal seaport, and one of her main lines of communication with her Russian ally.

Events now moved swiftly, for against the fire of von Mackensen's guns Zayonchovski's ill-supplied army could make no stand. On the 23rd Megidia fell, the station on the line half-way between Tchernavoda and Constanza, while the Rumanian right was driven back from Rashova. The great bridge was doomed. Constructed twenty years before by a French company, it was more than 1,000 yards long, built of steel on stone piers, and carried at a height of 100 feet above the river. The Rumanian bank was low-lying, a wide stretch of swamp and lagoon, and over the bad ground the railway was carried by ten miles of causeway and viaduct. The importance of the spot was not as a crossing-place, for such a crossing could be opposed by a small force on the hard ground about Feteshti, on the northern shore, beyond the marsh belt, and the invaders would have to advance by a long, open defile exposed for miles to gun fire. Von Mackensen had several better crossings higher up the river, and his attack on the bridge was only the last step in taking possession of the Constanza railway. Once he had secured it and driven Zayonchovski northwards into bad country with no railway communications, he could afford to entrench himself on the ground he had won, and prepare to invade Rumania across the Danube, so soon as von Falkenhayn was through the mountains.

Oct. 25- On the 25th the small Rumanian  
29. force which held the bridge retired across  
it, and blew up one of the spans. On  
that day the 1st Bulgarian Division entered the

town of Tchernavoda. On the 26th Zayonchovski was behind the line Hirshova-Casapkioui, twenty-four miles north of the railway, and by the 29th he was on the line Ostrov-Babadag. It is not clear whether it was von Mackensen's intention to press him farther into the marshes of the delta and seize the crossings at Machin and Tulcea, which now formed the only communications with Russia. If so, he was too late, for Russian reinforcements suc-



The Tchernavoda Crossing.

ceeded in joining hands with the Rumanian remnant. On 1st November General Sakharov, *Nov. 1.* formerly in command of the Russian Eleventh Army in Southern Volhynia, arrived to take command, and brought with him several strong divisions. The pursuit was stayed, and presently the counter-offensive began. But the centre of gravity was now in the west, where the Rumanian defence of the hills was beginning to crumble.

We have seen how von Falkenhayn was held at the debouchments of the central passes. The winter snows had begun, and it looked as if he had missed his stroke. But farther west the Rumanian First Army, holding the Rotherthurm and the Vulkan Passes, was less fortunate than Averescu and the troops of the Second. From the Rotherthurm Pass the Aluta flows for some thirty miles in a narrow gorge, accompanied by a road and a railway—a gorge from its nature impregnable to direct assault. The southern end is the village of Rimnic Valcea, and fifteen miles east of the place is the town of Curtea de Argesh, the terminus of one of the two railways which run from Piteshti to the hills. If Curtea de Argesh could be won by way of the Aluta and Kampolung by way of the Torzburg, the path would be prepared for the capture of Piteshti, the most important strategic point in Wallachia. Von Falkenhayn, therefore, aimed at Piteshti by a converging attack through the Torzburg and the Rotherthurm.

The Bavarian Alpine Corps, as we have seen, secured the southern end of the Rotherthurm on

*Sept. 26.* 26th September. During early October the force under General Krafft von Dellmensingen prepared for the next step, and on 15th October he began his advance in three columns. On the east a mountain brigade was to cross the high Moscovul Pass, and descend the glen of the Topologu against Salatrucul. In the centre the Bavarians followed the road which runs along the ridge between the Topologu and the Aluta. On the west an Austrian brigade was to take the high ground of Pietroasa and the Veverita mountain towards the tributary glen of the Lotru. At first all

went ill. The eastern force by 18th October had reached the hills directly north of Salatrucul, when the Rumanians closed in on its flanks from the Aluta and Argesh valleys, and but for a heavy snowstorm would have wholly destroyed it. So, too, the western brigade was caught on the Pietroasa *massif*, and flung back with heavy losses. The disasters to the wings compelled von Delmensingen to hold up the attack of his Bavarian centre. For a week there was a respite, and then at the close of October the offensive was renewed. On the 28th a fresh German division won positions on Mount Mormonta, between the Aluta and the Topologu. By this time the Aluta group of the Rumanian First Army had been reinforced by some of Presan's troops from the Fourth Army, released by the extension of Lechitsky's front; but the enemy was also strengthened, and, since his campaign in the Torzburg and Predeal Passes was checked, and he was about to make his main effort through the Vulkan Pass, it was necessary to pin down the Aluta group to a defence which would preclude it from sending reinforcements westward. By 1st November the Germans had reached the Titeshti valley, which enters that of the Aluta from the east. A week later they had mastered the heights of Sate and Frunto on both sides of the Topologu, and the *massif* of Cozia which commands the mouth of the Lotru glen. By this time events south of the Vulkan had compelled the Rumanians to send thither every man they could spare, and the Aluta group, thus weakened, was forced to fall back. By the middle of November the Germans had won

the Aluta valley as far as Calimaneshti and the Topologu valley as far as Suitsi, and controlled the road which linked up the two places. They were only ten miles from the vital railhead of Curtea de Argesh.

We come now to the section where the defence finally broke—the Vulkan Pass through which runs the road down the Jiu valley to the railhead at Targul Jiu. After beating off General von Staabs' attack in the Striu glen, the Rumanians, about the middle of October, were compelled to give way before the 11th Bavarian Division under General von Kneussl, and retire through the Vulkan. The enemy advanced in four columns, aiming at an ultimate concentration in the Jiu valley between Targul Jiu and Bumbeshti. General Dragalina, now in command of the Rumanian First Army, had inferior forces and no reserves. He took his stand on the lines which von Kneussl had marked for his objective, and borrowed a detachment from the division at Orsova and one from the Aluta group. With great tactical skill he made his dispositions, and on 27th

*Oct. 27.* October succeeded in checking the enemy attack, and taking many prisoners. Up to 1st November the Rumanians advanced, and

*Nov. 1.* drove von Kneussl back to the mountain ravines by which he had come. This first battle of Targul Jiu was the most brilliant success of the campaign, achieved as it was by forces inferior both in numbers and artillery. Unluckily it was paid for by the life of the gallant

*Nov. 9.* commander. General Dragalina died of his wounds on 9th November, and was succeeded in command of the First Army by General

Petale, while the actual fighting on the Jiu was placed under General Vasilescu.

In the beginning of November, though things had gone ill in the Dobrudja, the Rumanian defence in the west had succeeded beyond expectation. The invaders were still held in the foothills, and had nowhere won the debouchments to the plains. Von Falkenhayn accordingly revised his plans, and resolved to make his supreme effort in the Jiu valley. He knew the smallness of Vasilescu's force, and he knew, too, that there the lateral communications were worst of all, and least permitted the speedy dispatch of reinforcements. Accordingly General von Kuhne was put in charge of a strong group, which included among its new units the 111th Prussian Division under General Schmidt von Knobelsdorf; the 109th Prussian Division; and a cavalry corps, made up of the 6th and 7th German Cavalry Divisions. under Count Schmettow. Von Falkenhayn himself was present in this theatre to watch the fortunes of the new attack. To support it and prevent reinforcements reaching the meagre Rumanian First Army, Krafft von Delmensingen was ordered to press hard on the Aluta, and General von Morgen (whom we first met in 1914 commanding in East Prussia) in the Torzburg and Predeal section.

The heavy guns having been got through the passes, the new offensive began on 10th November with an attack by the two central German divisions against the position on *Nov. 10.* both banks of the Jiu. Ground was won on the heights, and at the same time a German force from the west pressed into the Upper Motru glen. By

the 13th the enemy was astride the Jiu valley some six miles north of Targul Jiu, and this

*Nov. 13.* place, the terminus of the railway from Crajova, fell on the 15th. The Rumanian position now ran from Copaceni, west of

*Nov. 15.* the Jiu, to the river Gilort, down whose valley ran the Crajova line. The situation was desperate, and reinforcements were hurried westward from the Aluta group. They were fated

*Nov. 17.* to arrive too late, for on 17th November the second battle of the Jiu was fought, and the whole Rumanian defence crumbled before superior numbers and a far superior weight of guns. Von Kuhne was advancing on a wide front, flinging von Schmettow's cavalry far out on his flanks, and

*Nov. 19.* by the 19th he had reached Filiasa, the junction where the line from Targul Jiu joins the main railway from Bucharest to Budapest by way of Orsova. This put the Rumanian division at Orsova, under Colonel Anastasiu, in dire jeopardy.

The retreat of the First Army was now eastward instead of southward. Its first hope was to prevent its left flank being turned, and to fall back on the pivot of the Aluta group, and hold the line of that

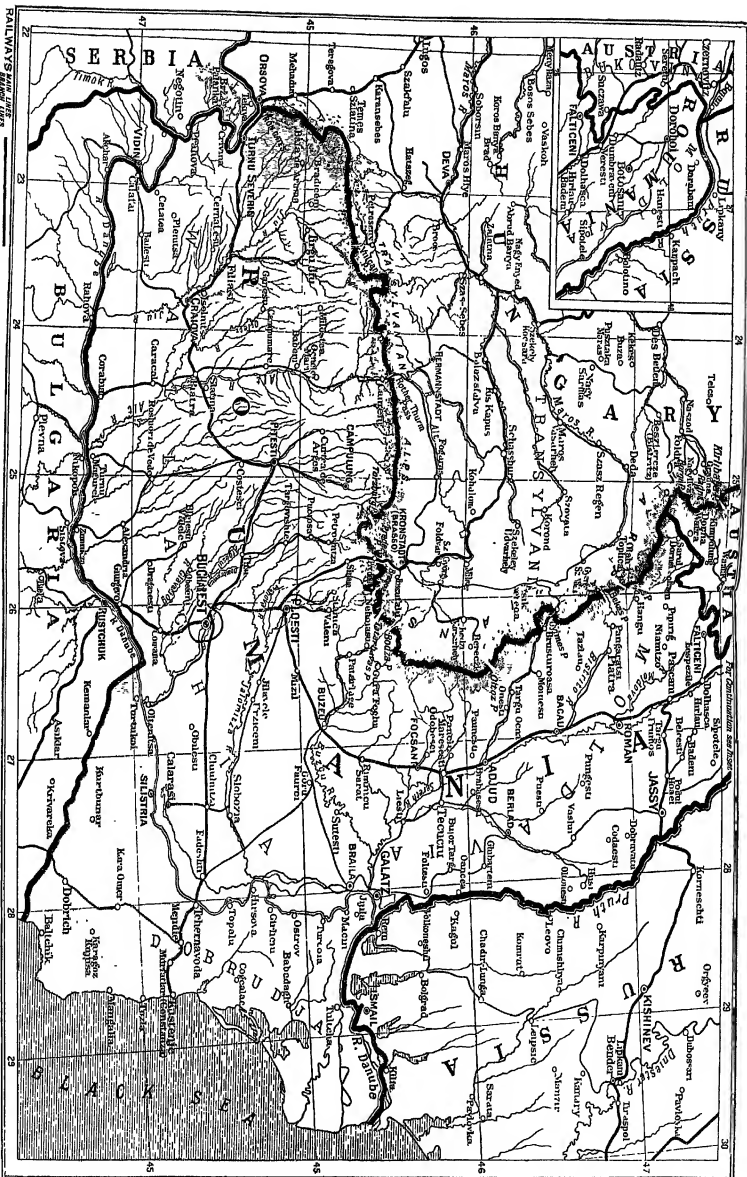
*Nov. 21.* river. On 21st November troops of the German 41st Division entered Crajova, which the Rumanians had evacuated. Von Kuhne was now well into the Wallachian plains, and his progress became rapid. The next objective was the

*Nov. 23.* line of the Aluta, and two days later he was in touch with its defence on the front between Dragashani and Caracalu. The attack on the centre at the railway bridge of Slatina failed, but Count Schmettow's cavalry managed to









Situation when von Mackensen crossed the Danube (Rumanian territory occupied by the invaders shaded).

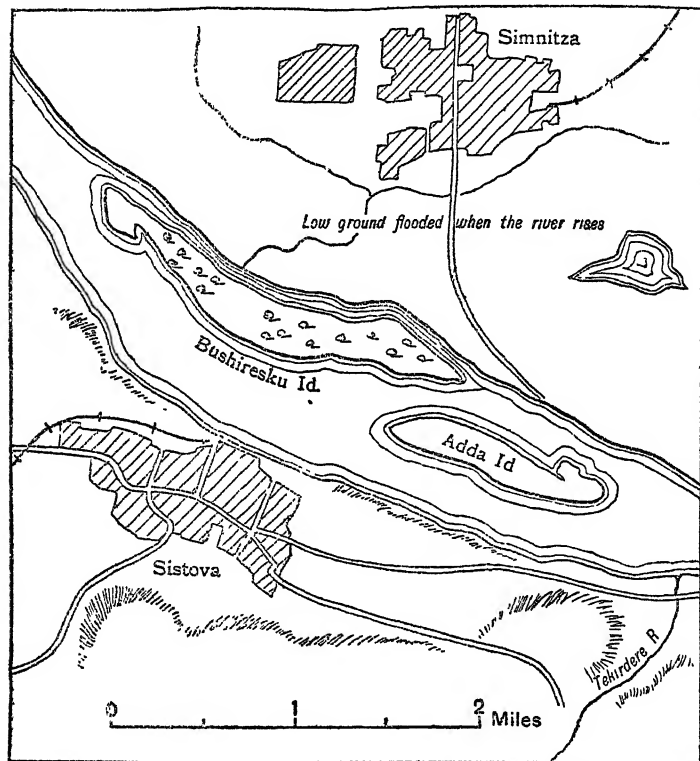


cross the river at Caracalu. The position was turned, the railway bridge and the granaries of Slatina were blown up, and by the 27th the Aluta line was abandoned. It was not a moment too soon, for in the north the group of Krafft von Delmensingen had begun to threaten the right flank south of the Rotherthurm Pass, and in the south the left flank was already turned. For on the 23rd von Mackensen had begun to cross the Danube. *Nov. 27.*

We have seen that the arrival of Sakharov in the Dobrudja on 1st November had put new life into the defence. On 9th November he recaptured Hirshova, on the Danube, and pushed back von Mackensen in the centre as far as Muslu. On that day, too, a Rumanian attack from Feteshti, on the northern shore of the river, gave them the riverside station of Dunarea, at the north end of the Tchernavoda bridge. Pushing on, by the middle of the month Sakharov was in position from a point on the Danube some seven miles north of Tchernavoda to the shore of the Black Sea fifteen miles north of Constanza. But he never reached the railway, being held by the strong lines which the enemy had constructed for its defence; and before he could attack them in force the *débâcle* in the west had put a further offensive in the Dobrudja out of the question. *Nov. 9.*

Early in November von Mackensen, having entrusted the task of watching Sakharov to Prince Boris of Bulgaria, turned to his main objective, the crossing of the Danube. In late autumn the river is not a formidable obstacle to an army operating from the south bank. The stream is at its lowest

—not more than ten feet deep between Nicopoli and Silistria, and the current is from eight to ten miles an hour. The south bank, as we have seen, is a high bluff with in many places, when the river is



The Sistova-Simnitza Crossing of the Danube.

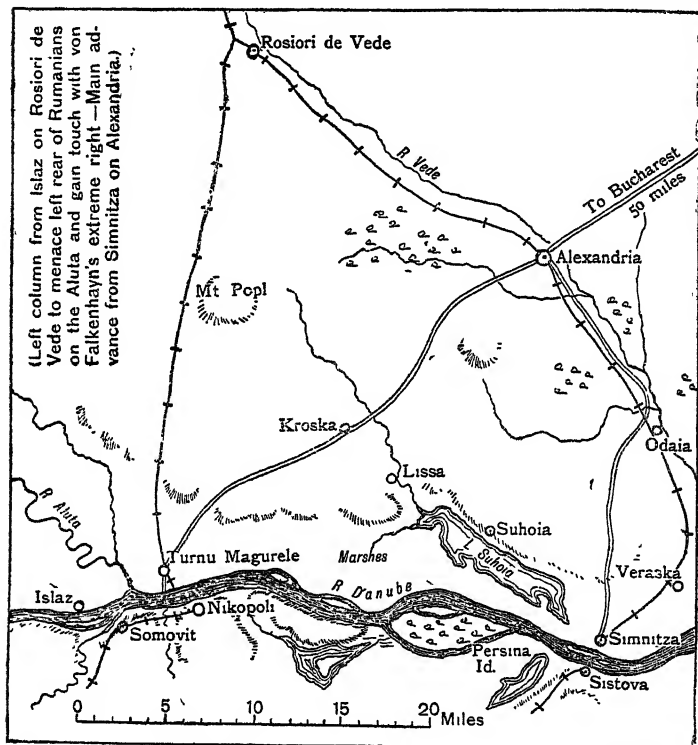
low, a beach beneath it ; while the northern shore is for the most part swamp and backwater. Holding the high bank, an army with modern guns can sweep the northern shore for three or four miles

inland, and command the narrow strips of hard ground between the marshes. In addition to this advantage, von Mackensen had at his command a powerful river flotilla of monitors and gunboats, which could lie hidden behind the shrubby islets. So soon as the fall of Orsova and Turnu Severin had opened the way from the upper waters, long trains of barges came downstream, bringing abundant bridging material.

He selected for his first crossing-places Islaz, opposite the Bulgarian railhead of Somovit, and Sistova-Simnitztza, the very place where the Russians had crossed in 1877. These points were selected in order to turn the new Rumanian line of defence on the Aluta. At both places the bridging of the river would be facilitated by the islands in the stream; and, since the Sistova crossing in peace times is one of the busiest ferries on the river, there were good landing arrangements on both banks.

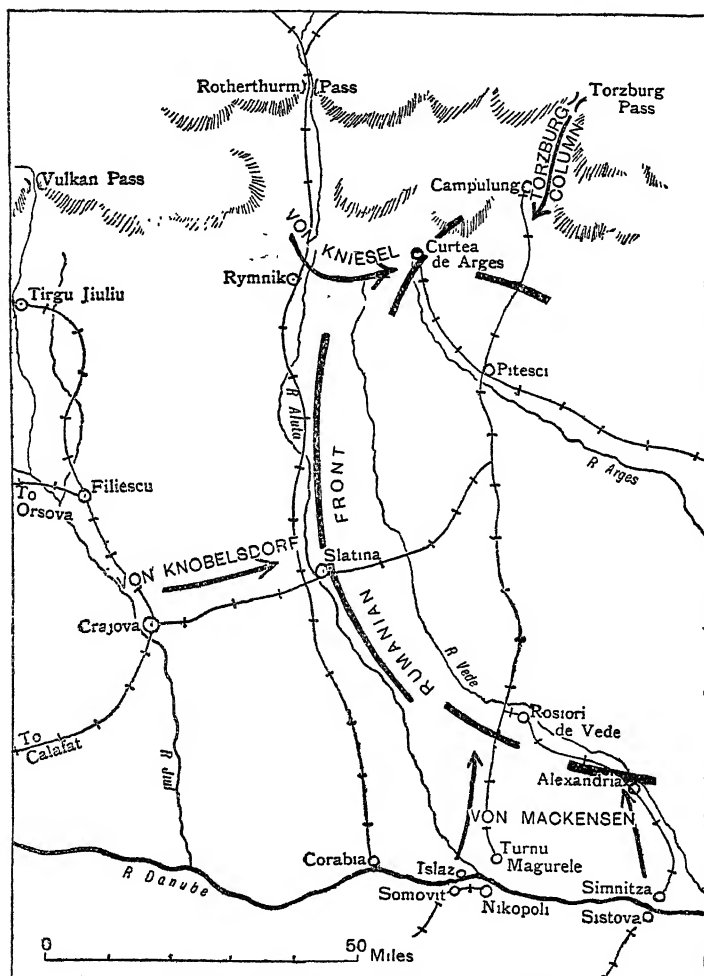
On 19th November the preliminary German bombardment began to clear the north shore. A thick haze hung over the stream, and under its cover on the night of the 22nd—*Nov. 19–23.* 23rd the enemy river craft swarmed out from the shelter of the creeks and islands. In 1877 the Russians had taken thirty-three days to cross; von Mackensen did the main work in eighteen hours. The first troops crossed in steam ferries, and when they had seized the opposite bank pontoon bridges were constructed with amazing speed. There was practically no opposition, for the enemy's overwhelming superiority in guns made it impossible for the Rumanian river guards to make even a show of resistance. By the 26th von Mackensen was able to

report that he had an army group under General von Kosch on the northern bank ; that he  
*Nov. 26.* had cleared the country for twenty miles inland ; and that his van was close on Alexandria.



Von Mackensen's Crossing of the Danube.

Presently at every Danube ferry the enemy was crossing. Bulgarian cavalry were over the stream at Corabia, and in the east from Rustchuk a Bulgarian detachment sacked Giurgevo.



The Forcing of the Line of the Aluta.

The end had now fairly come. The Rumanian left flank on the Aluta was turned, and events in



the north put the pivot on which they swung in danger. The enemy was still held at the Predeal, but von Morgen's right wing entered Kampolung on 29th November. At the same time *Nov. 29.* Krafft von Delmensingen was pressing hard from the Rotherthurm. On the 25th he reached Rimnic Valcea, and on the 27th took Curtea de Argesh. On the 29th Piteshti fell, and the invaders' line ran by way of Dragenesti to Giurgevo—within thirty miles of Bucharest.

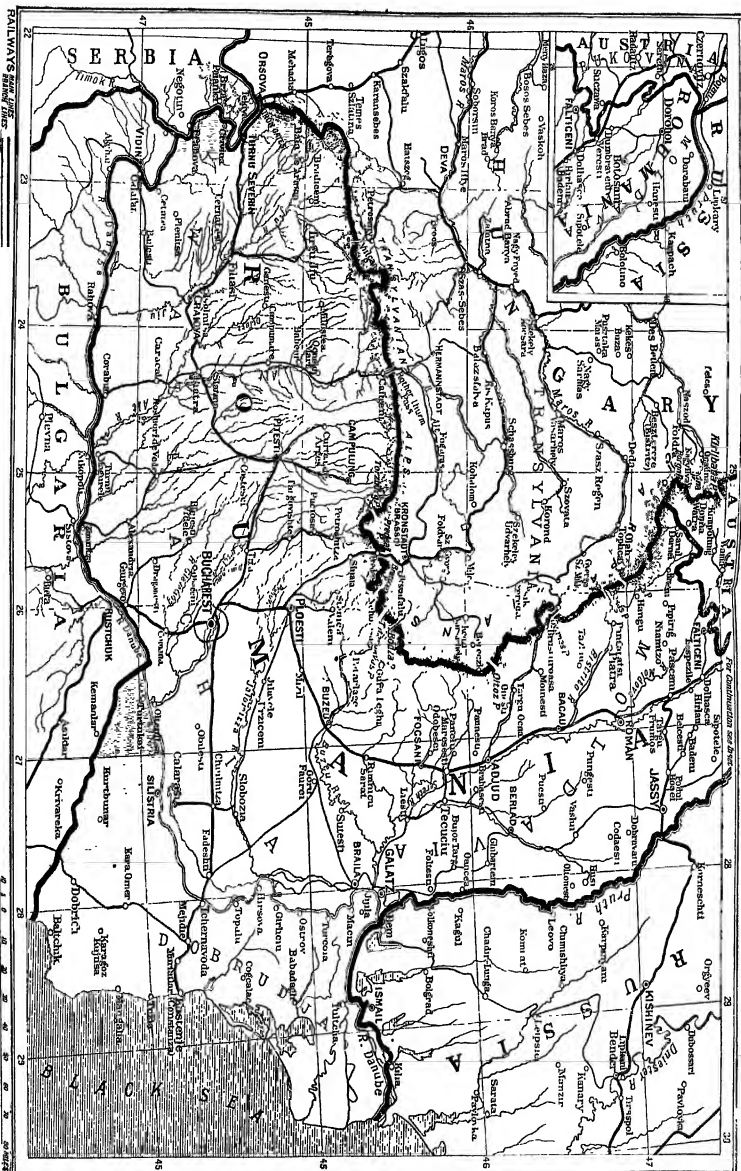
Before this sweep the Rumanian groups of the Jiu and the Aluta had fallen back in fair order. But two of the frontier forces were in dire straits. One—the Orsova division—was already beyond hope. Under its gallant leader, Colonel Anastasiu, *Nov. 25.* it had left Orsova on 25th November, and attempted to retreat south-eastward to the Aluta. After three weeks' wild adventures it reached the valley, only to find it held by the enemy.

*Dec. 7.* On 7th December, two days after the capital fell, the remnant of the 7,000 surrendered at Caracalu, having extorted from the enemy admiration for their undaunted valour. The Kampolung group, after the fall of Piteshti, was compelled to move south-east over difficult country, and eventually reached Targovishta and the Dambovitza valley, where it joined the main Rumanian forces.

The situation now was that from the Predeal Pass eastward and northward the mountain position was still held, and the Russians in the Moldavian passes were successfully counter-attacking the enemy. But from the Predeal westward all the passes had gone, the Upper Argesh valley was lost, and in the







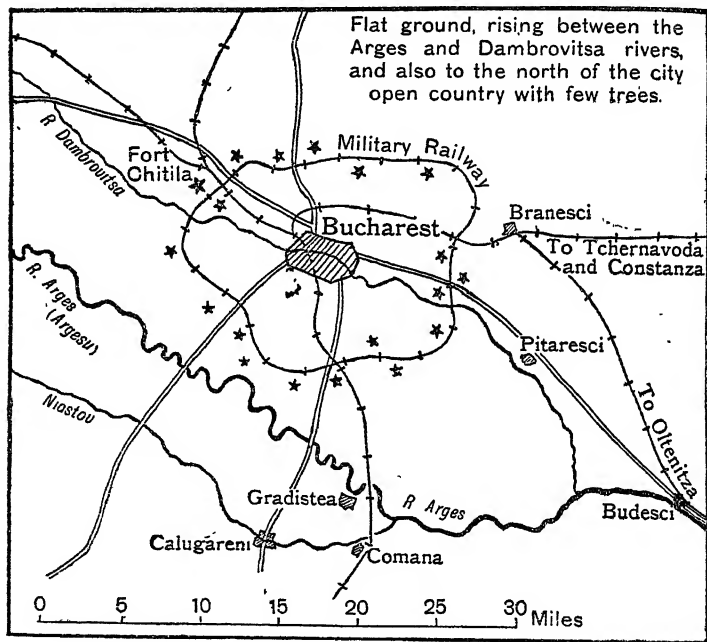
Situation on November 28 (Rumanian territory occupied by the invaders indicated by shading).



south von Mackensen had pushed between the capital and the Danube. General Averescu, now in supreme command of the Rumanian forces, attempted one last stand before Bucharest. A Russian division had arrived in support, and north-west lay what was left of the First Army. South and south-west Presan commanded a group formed of troops from what had once been the Third and Fourth Armies to hold the line of the Lower Argesh. On *Nov. 30.* 30th November the Germans forced the passage of the little river Nealovu, only sixteen miles from the capital. On 1st December *Dec. 1.* Presan attempted a counterstroke with the object of driving a wedge between von Mackensen and the German centre under von Kuhne. He almost succeeded, for he flung the enemy back over the Nealovu, taking thirty guns and 1,000 prisoners. Unfortunately the expected reserves came too late, and the enemy was reinforced before Presan could press his victory home. The success of 1st December was changed on the 2nd and 3rd to disaster, and Presan's broken *Dec. 2-3.* forces were driven in upon Bucharest. Meantime farther north the remains of the First Army could not bar the roads down the Upper Argesh and the Dambovitza. The vital junction of Titu fell, and Targovishta, the border-town of the great oilfields, passed into enemy hands.

Since the line of the Argesh and Dambovitza could not be held, it was clear that Bucharest was doomed. In the days before the war the Rumanian capital ranked as one of the great fortresses of Europe. Around the city the land is a flat plain, open, treeless, and highly fertile, broken only by a

slight rise between the Argesh and the Dambovitza. Such country was considered ideal for a modern fortress, and more than thirty years ago the Rumanian Government accepted the suggestion of Brialmont, the Belgian engineer, to make of the place an entrenched camp like Antwerp. In those



The Defences of Bucharest.

days the dreaded enemy was Russia, and Brialmont intended that Bucharest should be the central point for the defence against the Russians advancing towards the Danube, its works being supplemented by an entrenched line on the Lower Sereth from Galatz to Focsani. Brialmont's forts, nineteen in

number, were arranged in an irregular oval at a distance of from six to nine miles from the centre of the city, connected by a circular railway linked up by three junctions with the existing lines. The forts were of the same type as those of Liège and Namur, a mass of concrete covering a vaulted underground structure, and forming the glacis for armoured steel turrets mounting heavy guns.

Brialmont was a great engineer, and the defences were impregnable against the artillery of his day. But in 1914 the first months of war showed that, under the fire of the latest siege artillery, the turret fort, with its steel armour and concrete glacis, was futile. Five million sterling had been expended on the forts of Bucharest; for this campaign it was as utterly wasted as if it had been thrown into the Black Sea. It needed 120,000 men to man the defences, and to shut up these numbers in the place would have been to make a present of them to the enemy. The Rumanian Staff had long recognized this truth, and the most they could do was to fight a delaying action on the Argesh to cover the evacuation. That had begun towards the end of November, when von Mackensen first crossed the Danube. By 1st December the Ministers, the banks, and the Allied Legations had moved to Jassy, in Moldavia. On Monday, 4th December, the Arsenal was blown up. On 5th December von Mackensen entered the city. *Dec. 5.*

Meantime, in the north, von Falkenhayn was approaching Ploeshti, the centre of the oil region. As he moved east from Targovishta he had before him, like the Israelites in the desert, a pillar of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night. The air

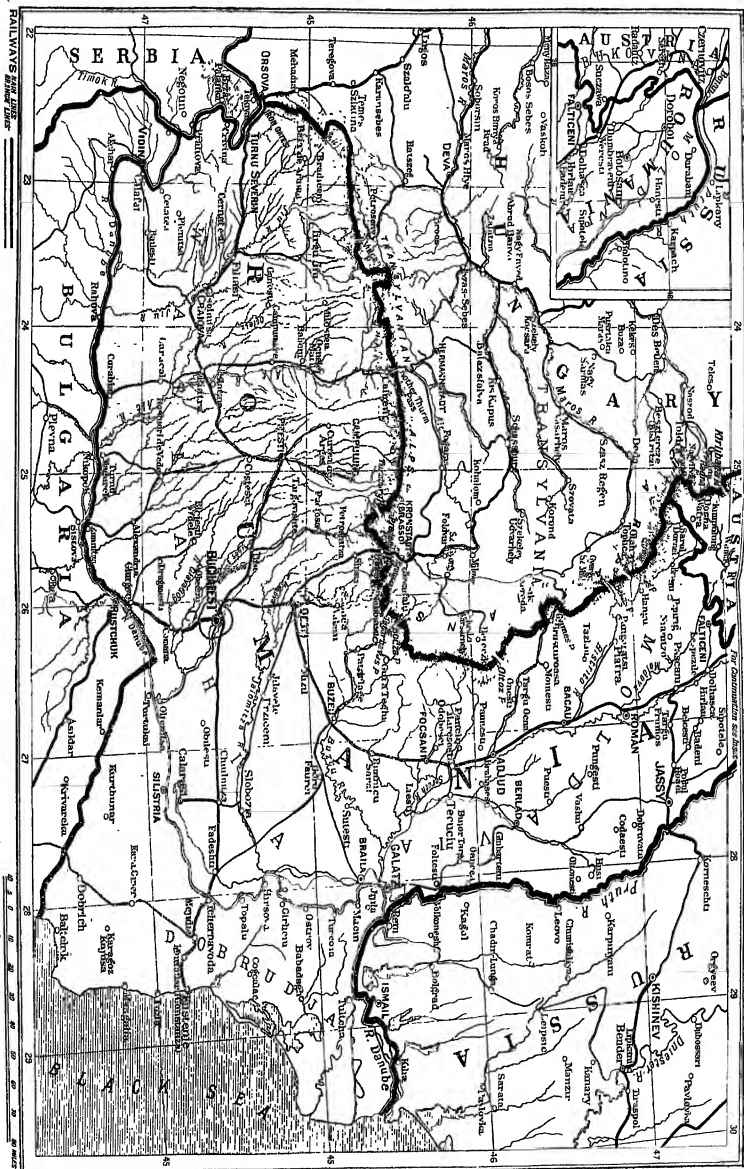


was rank with the fog and fumes of burning oil. The head works of the wells, the wells themselves, the refineries, the stores, the tanks—all were ablaze as the Rumanians retreated. The destruction was largely the work of a British Member of Parliament, Colonel Norton Griffiths, assisted by the many American engineers employed in the oilworks, and millions of pounds' worth of property was destroyed in a few days. In front of the German armies moved a crowd of fugitives of every class and condition. Roads and railways were congested with traffic. "Trains sometimes took half a day to cover fifty miles," wrote one correspondent, "and on the roads one was liable at any moment to be mixed up in a jam of ox-wagons, motor transport, hay-carts, driven cattle, and retreating troops. Among them in an inextricable mass were refugees in all kinds of vehicle, from small open cabs to lumbering farm wagons drawn by oxen." In the towns on the line of the retreat there was little shelter and scanty fare. It was a starved and frozen crowd that struggled into Jassy and Galatz.

The advance of von Falkenhayn to Ploeshti had compelled the Rumanians to abandon the defence of the Predeal. Sinaia, the summer residence of King Ferdinand, among the pine-woods of the Prahova valley, was occupied on the same day as the capital. The German line now ran from the Predeal through Sinaia, Ploeshti, and Bucharest to the Danube, where Oltenitsa had been abandoned, and a new Bulgarian force was crossing from Turtukai. Wallachia had gone, and the defence was confined to the short front between the apex of the Transylvanian salient at the Buzeu Pass and the







Situation after the fall of Bucharest, showing the extent of Rumanian territory occupied by the invaders (shaded).



river. North of the Buzeu the mountain frontier was still unbroken. The Rumanian army had suffered no Sedan; but it had lost heavily, and the remnant was broken and weary. It was clear that the defence of Moldavia must rest mainly with the Russian reinforcements.

Contemporary history is rarely just to failure. Only when the mists have cleared and the main issues have been decided can the belligerents afford to weigh each section of a campaign in a just scale. Rumania's entry into the war had awakened baseless hopes among her Allies; her failure—her inexplicable failure, as it seemed to many—was followed by equally baseless criticism and complaint. The truth is, that when Brussilov and Sarrail had once failed to achieve their purpose, her chances of success were nil. She attempted a strategic problem which only a wild freak of fortune could have permitted her to solve. Her numbers from the start were too small, too indifferently trained, and too weakly supplied with guns. Nevertheless, once she stood with her back to the wall, this little people, inexperienced in war, made a heroic fight for it. Let justice be done to the skill and fortitude of the Rumanian retreat. Her generals were quick to grasp the elements of danger, and by their defence of the central passes prevented the swift and utter disaster of which her enemies dreamed. After months of fighting, during which his armies lost heavily, von Falkenhayn gained Wallachia and the capital; but the plunder was not a tithe of what he had hoped for. The Rumanian expedition was, let it be remembered, a foraging expedition in its main

intention, and the provender secured was small. The ten weeks of the retreat were marked by conspicuous instances of Rumanian quality in the field, and the battles of Hermannstadt and the Striu valley, the defence of the Predeal, Torzburg, and Rotherthurm Passes, the first battle of Targul Jiu, and Presan's counterstroke on the Argesh were achievements of which any army might be proud. And the staunch valour of the Roman legionaries still lived in the heroic band who, under Anastasiu, cut their way from Orsova to the Aluta.

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## CHAPTER CXXI.

### THE POSITION IN THE BALKANS.

Situation at End of August—Surrender to the Bulgarians of the 4th Greek Corps—Sarrail's Plan—Disposition of the Front—British Activity East of the Struma—The Attack on Monastir begins—The Serbian Corps carry Kaymakchalan—Recapture of Florina—The Defences of Monastir—Von Winckler takes Charge of the Defence—Mishitch crosses the Tcherna—The Kenali Lines evacuated—Mishitch outflanks Winckler—The Allies enter Monastir—The Environs cleared—The Serbian Achievement—The Political Situation at Athens—The Zaimis Ministry—Its Difficulties—Revolution breaks out at Salonika—Allied Fleet arrives off the Piræus—M. Zaimis resigns—M. Dimitrakopoulos fails to form a Government—The Attempt of M. Kalogeropoulos—Revolution in Crete—Venizelos leaves Athens—Formation of Provisional Government at Salonika—The Lambros Government—The Outrages of 1st and 2nd December—The Allied Ultimata—The King submits—Difficulties of Allied Problem—Greatness of M. Venizelos.

WE left the narrative of the Salonika campaign at the close of August, when the Bulgarian offensive had carried the troops of Teodorov's Second Army to the gates of Kavalla. The northern forts were occupied on 25th August, and on 14th September the invaders entered the town itself. Then followed strange doings. The bulk of the 4th Greek Corps, stationed in the place, along with one Colonel Hatzopoulos its commander, surrendered itself with-



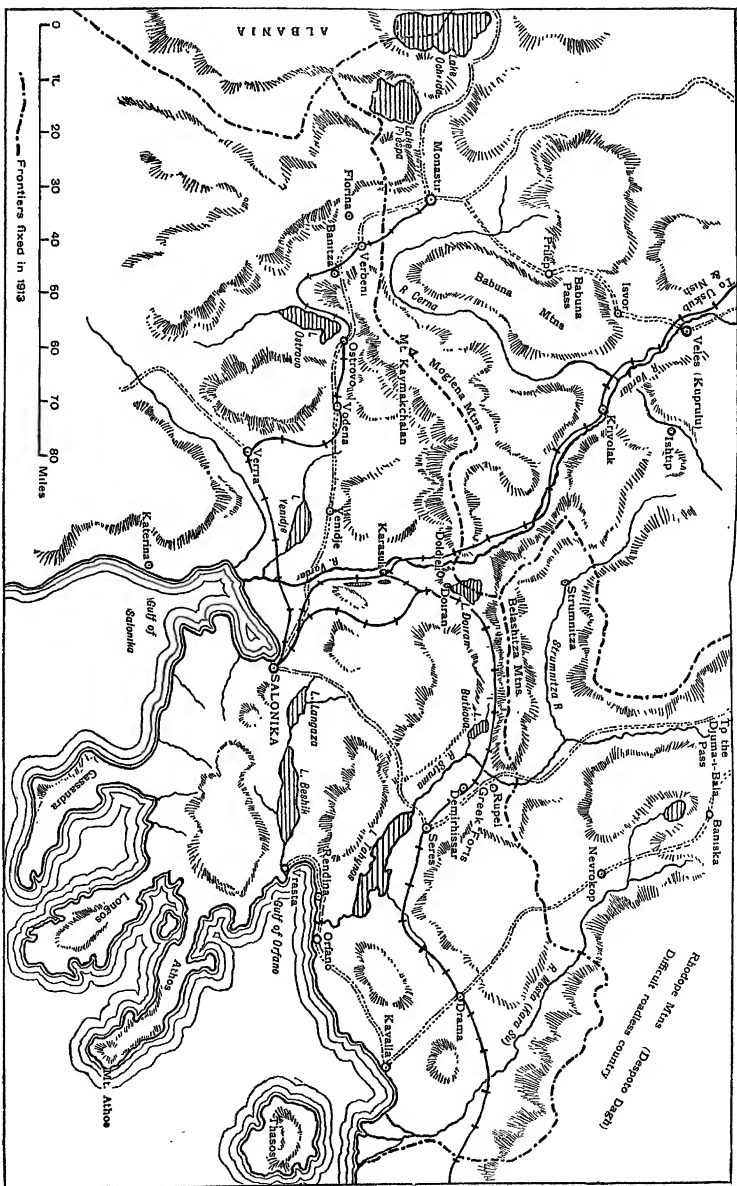
out a blow to the enemy, and was transported to Germany as "guests" of the German Government. One portion, the 6th Division, under Colonel Christodoulos, succeeded in making its way by Thasos to Salonika, to join the Allied forces. The Athens Government repudiated the action of the commander of the 4th Corps, alleging that he had strict orders, in case of necessity, to transport his troops to Volo. But over these instructions, as over the similar case of the surrender of Fort Rupel, there hung a mist of doubt and suspicion.

Rumania had begun her campaign, and it behoved Sarraill to play his part in detaining her enemies. But the events of August had made it very clear to him that no offensive could succeed by way of the Vardar and Struma valleys. The enemy was too strongly in force, and the country was too difficult. His one hope lay in the west, where, not too remote from the Allied lines, lay Monastir, the most cherished of Bulgaria's gains in the war—a city which the enemy might be trusted to fight hard to retain. In that quarter was to be found a possible objective in the military sense, and at the same time a certain means of engaging Bulgaria's attention. Accordingly the bulk of Cordonnier's French force, the Serbian Corps under Mishitch, and the Russian contingent were allocated to the advance west of the Vardar. By the last day of August, except for a French mounted detachment, the whole front from the Vardar eastwards was in British hands.

The task of General Milne was that of controlling the Bulgarian Second Army so that it should not send reinforcements to the First Army in the Monastir section. His methods were fierce artillery bom-







## The Salonika Front.

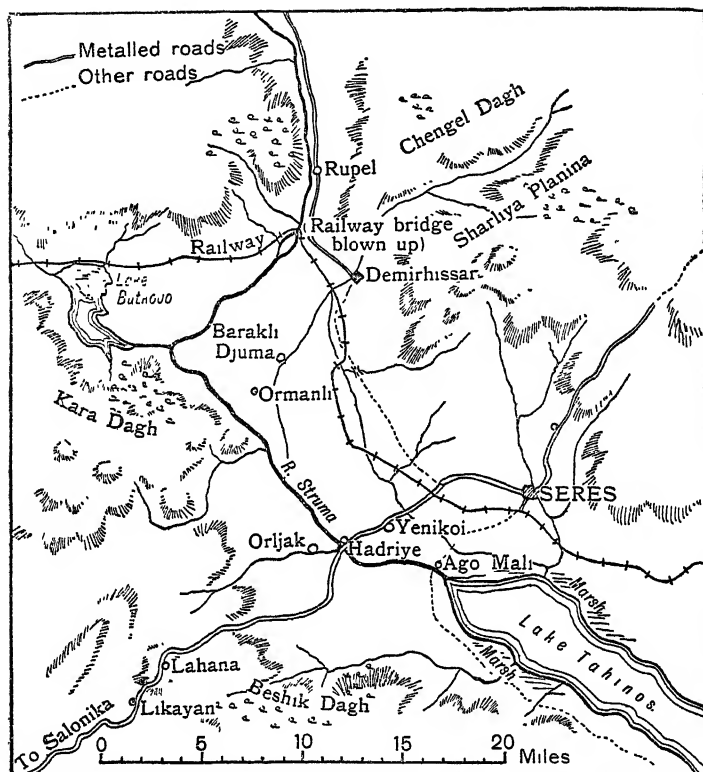


bardments and well-organized raids into the enemy lines. He slowly made ground, till by the end of the year he had advanced the British front east of the Struma, and had prepared a position secure from assault, and formidable enough to detain large enemy forces. On 10th September the Struma was crossed at five places above *Sept. 10.*

Lake Tahinos, and a number of villages occupied. Five days later there was a second successful crossing in the same area, and yet another on the 23rd, when the sudden rising of the river made operations difficult. Between 11th and 13th September the Bulgarian front between the Vardar and Lake Doiran was heavily *Sept. 11-13.*

bombarded at a point where it formed a salient, and the subsequent infantry attack, in which battalions of the King's Liverpools and the Lancashire Fusiliers specially distinguished themselves, inflicted severe losses on the enemy. Towards the close of the month, in order to co-operate with the impending attack on Florina, preparations were made for a more prolonged effort beyond the Struma. Bridges were improvised between Orljak and Lake Tahinos, and on the night of 29th September our infantry crossed. On the 30th a brigade, *Sept. 29-30.*

consisting of battalions of the Gloucesters, the Royal Scots, the Camerons, and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, carried various villages, beat off counter-attacks, and by 2nd October had consolidated their position. On the 3rd a brigade, made up of battalions of the Munster and Dublin Fusiliers, won the village of *Oct. 3.* Yenikoi, on the main road from Seres to Salonika. The Bulgarians counter-attacked desperately during



The Struma Front.

the afternoon and evening, but by the following morning our ground was secure. On the 5th, Nevolian, a hamlet north of the high-road, was taken, and on the 7th we flung forward a cavalry reconnoissance which located the enemy on the railway between Demir Hissar and Seres. Presently we were astride the line, and the Bulgarians took up strong positions on the

high ground to the eastward. On 1st November we captured Barakli Djuma, six miles south-west of Demir Hissar, taking over three *Nov. 1.* hundred prisoners, and strengthened our hold on the railway north of Seres. But the floods of the Struma, the wintry weather, and the strength of the enemy prevented us from undertaking any larger movement. In artillery work we had shown ourselves conspicuously superior to the Bulgarians, and our activity of the autumn won us immunity from attack during the winter trench warfare. The British had performed the task assigned to them, and immobilized Teodorov while Sarraïl's left wing was creeping nearer to Monastir.

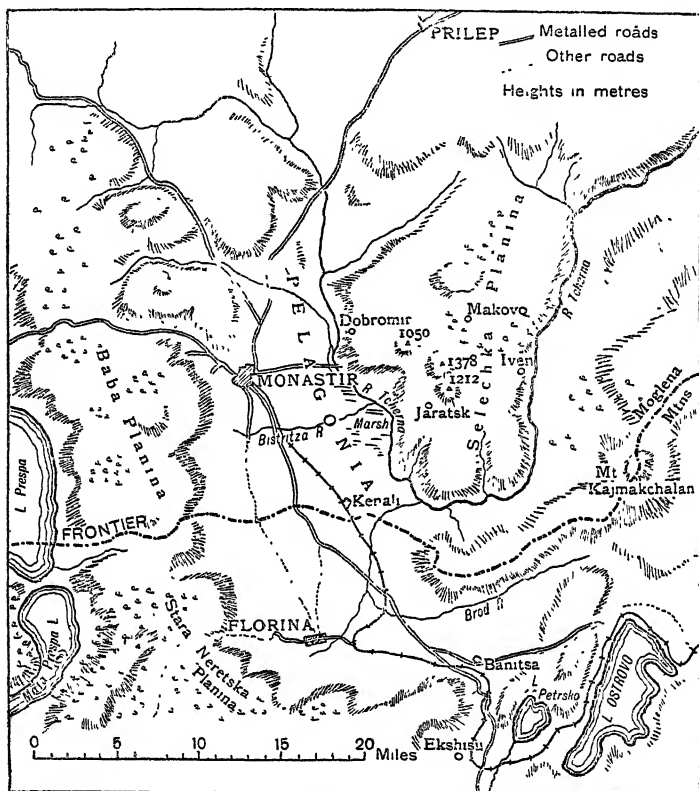
At the end of August the Bulgarian First Army was still advancing, and there was fierce fighting on the northern shore of Lake Ostrovo. By the last day of the month that offensive had been definitely checked, and on 7th September the *Sept. 7.* Allied attack began. On the extreme left, in Albania, the Italians were in motion east of Avlona. The main front directed against Monastir was held by the Serbian Corps on the right, and by the French and Russians on the left. The city lies at the mouth of a gorge on the western side of the Pelagonian plain. East of it the river Tcherná flows southward, and then turns to the north in a wide curve, containing in its loop a number of minor ridges of hills. The Salonika road and railway run south also, west of the Tcherná curve, to the Greek border and Florina, cross the watershed, and turn along the north shore of Lake Orsovo. Between that lake and the Tcherná loop lies the Moglena



range of mountains, close on 8,000 feet high, which separates Greece from south-western Macedonia. Against an enemy advancing from the south-east Monastir is well protected. Whoever holds the Moglena crest can bar all access to the plain. Even when the frontier is passed, strong lines of defence are possible by means of the various tributaries entering the Tcherná from the west. Sarraïl's plan was simple. The Serbians were directed from the Vodena-Lake Ostrovo line against the Moglena ridge, while farther west the French and Russians moved on Florina and the southern entrance to the Monastir plain. If the mountains were won and the advance pushed beyond them, it was clear that any defensive position in the south of that plain would be turned on its eastern flank, and once the hills in the Tcherná loop were carried the city would fall.

The Serbians began their main advance on 7th September, at a time when the valleys were yellow with ripening millet, and the orchards around the little villages were heavy with fruit. West and north of Lake Ostrovo they progressed in a series of bounds, making brilliant use of their field guns, and storming the enemy trenches on the slopes with hand grenade and bayonet. They were fighting for revenge, and every foot gained brought them nearer to their native soil. Their left wing moved towards Banitsa, and their centre and right against the *massif* of Kaymakchalan, the highest point of the

Sept. 14. Moglena range. On the 14th they took Ekshisu, on the railway between Ostrovo and Florina, by a dashing cavalry charge, and pushed their front well up the steep ridge to the north.



The Monastir District.

On the 16th the Franco-Russian force, sweeping in a wide curve south-west of Lake Sept. 16. Ostrovo, was close on the Greek town of Florina, which the Bulgarians had taken a month before. Four days later the Serbians Sept. 20. stormed the summit of Kaymakchalan, and there for the first time re-entered their native

land. That morning also, after a battle which lasted all the previous day and night, the Franco-Russian troops carried Florina by assault. The Allies were now in the Monastir plain, their left moving up the railway, their centre approaching the Tcherná loop, and their right on the top of the flanking mountains. The men on the hilltops were looking over the empty fields and yellowing vineyards to the red roofs and shining white walls and minarets of the most ancient of Balkan cities.

To defend Monastir there were three main lines of entrenchments. One ran north of Florina and south of the Greek frontier; a second lay from the western hills through the village of Kenali to the loop of the Tcherná; while a third followed the little river Bistritza just south of the city itself. The key to the whole position was Kaymakchalan, and to regain this the Bulgarians made many desperate

*Sept. 26-* and fruitless counter-attacks. On the  
*27.* 26th at dawn came such a venture, which

was broken before the sun rose. Late on the night of the 27th four different assaults were launched, one of which succeeded in taking the advanced Serbian line on the northern slope; but the crest remained in the Allied hands. Two days

*Sept. 29.* later Mishitch made another bound forward, and pushed his front one and a quarter miles north of Kaymakchalan, spreading also down the slopes towards the Tcherná. The result was to outflank the first Bulgarian position for the defence of the Monastir plain, and to drive the enemy back to the Kenali lines, only ten miles from the city.

While the Franco-Russians faced Kenali on the

plain, it was the task of Mishitch to continue the outflanking movement by crossing the Tcherná and winning the ridge in the loop of the river. The bridges had been destroyed, but by 5th October the river had been crossed in the region of Brod and Dobravéni. The Serbians now held twenty-five miles of frontier, and had regained ninety square miles of their own land, including seven villages. About this time the First Bulgarian Army seems to have definitely passed under the charge of the German general von Winckler, and German reinforcements, mainly Alsatian, were beginning to arrive. The Kenali position was virtually impregnable to a frontal attack, and it was hoped to hold Mishitch among the ridges inside the loop once the river was crossed.

The next great attack came on 14th October. After a heavy artillery preparation the infantry went into action at one o'clock in the morning all along the line. But the position was *Oct. 14.* too strong to be carried by a frontal assault, and little was achieved. On the 17th the Serbians attacked north of the Tcherná, and forced their way well into the loop, getting behind the main alignment of the Kenali position. *Oct. 17-*  
*21.* On the 19th they were nearly four miles north of Brod. Then on 21st October the weather broke, and Sarraíl had to endure the same obstacles from rainstorms which were at the moment delaying the British advance on the Somme. In drenching wet and fog the fighting in the Tcherná hills slowed down. The opportunity was taken by von Winckler to strengthen his front and bring up his reserves, and for a little it looked as if the chance of the Allies

had gone for the year. The new arrivals counter-

*Oct. 22.* attacked on the 22nd, but Mishitch held his ground in the loop, and in some places advanced his line. During the last week of October these attacks were many times repeated, while the Franco-Russians bombarded their fourteen-mile front, aiming especially at preventing the movement of troops from one bank of the Tchernia to the other.

On 14th and 15th November Mishitch struck again. He moved forward in the loop, taking 1,000

*Nov. 14-* prisoners, mostly Germans, and reach-  
*15.* ing a point only a dozen miles from Monastir. This victory spelled the doom of the Kenali lines, now hopelessly outflanked. Violent counter-attacks failed to delay the Allied progress, for on the 14th the Franco-Russians broke into the Kenali front, fighting in a sea of mud, and early on the 15th it was found that the enemy had evacuated the position and fallen back to the Bistritza, less than four miles from Monastir. The Bulgarian line now ran in the loop of the Tchernia through Jaratok and Iven, with the Serbians close on their trail.

The city was all but won, for, if the Kenali lines which von Mackensen had prepared a year before could not be held, there was little hope for those on the Bistritza, which were only a month old. Thurs-

*Nov. 16-* day, the 16th, was a day of rain and fog,  
*17.* and the Serbians, who now, as before, had the vital task, could not make progress. But Friday was clear and bright, and after severe fighting Mishitch carried before evening Hill 1,212, north of Jaratok. One height only remained, that marked in the map 1,378, before the Serbians

would be masters of all the high ground in the Tchernia loop, and be able to descend upon the Prilep road north of Monastir, and cut off the retreat of the enemy forces. On Saturday, the 18th, late in the evening, Hill *Nov. 18.* 1,378 fell, and at daybreak on the 19th the Serbians were in Makovo and Dobromir, and so well to the north-east of Monastir.

Von Winckler retreated while yet there was time. At 8.15 a.m. on Sunday, the 19th, the last German battalion hastened out along the Prilep *Nov. 19.* road, and at 8.30 French cavalry were in the streets. At nine came the first French infantry, and then a Russian battalion, and then an Italian detachment which had come in on the extreme left. Later in the day from across the Tchernia the Serbians arrived in their recovered city. To them the fall of Monastir was mainly due, for by their brilliant flanking movements, first at Kaymakchalan and then in the Tchernia loop, they had rendered futile the enemy's long-prepared defences. It was an auspicious omen that they entered Monastir on the anniversary of the day on which, four years before, their troops had wrested it from the Turks.

The enemy had fallen back a dozen miles towards Prilep. He was not pursued, for at that season of the year no great advance was possible. The white Babuna mountains barred all northern exits from the plain. The country around Monastir was cleared, however, in a wide radius, and on 27th November the hill marked 1,050, *Nov. 27.* between Makovo and the Tchernia, which if held by the enemy would be a thorn in the side

of the Allies, was brilliantly carried by French Zouaves. There were minor actions during December, but by the end of the year the fighting on the whole Salonika front had returned to the normal conditions of trench warfare. The campaign, though it did not bring relief to Rumania, had not wholly failed. It had restored to Serbia a famous city as an earnest of greater things, and it had proved to the world, if proof were needed, the heroic steadfastness of her exiled sons. Had Mishitch been given the use of the reserves, Prilep also would have fallen to his hand.

During the operations in the north the political situation in Greece was marching steadily to a deeper confusion. We have seen that the surrender of Fort Rupel had been succeeded on 6th

*June 6.* June by an Allied blockade of Greek shipping, and that the unsatisfactory partial demobilization which M. Skouloudis's Government announced had been followed by an Allied ultimatum which led to the formation of a "Service" Cabinet under M. Zaimis. The new Government was non-party in character, and was pledged to carry out in their entirety the Allied demands. Its intention was to proceed with new elections so soon as the army had been demobilized, and it seemed probable that these elections would take place in the middle of August. But the activity of the Reservists' Leagues all over the land made it necessary to retard the elections, which on 16th August

*Aug. 16.* were definitely fixed for 8th October. Then came the Bulgarian invasion, and the occupation of the better part of Eastern Mace-

donia. The loss of so large a slice of Greek territory put any general election out of the question. The surrender of the 4th Army Corps to the enemy, and the open approval given by the military authorities to the extension of the Reservists' Leagues had brought things to a pass where normal constitutional machinery had little meaning.

On 27th August M. Venizelos addressed a mass meeting in Athens to protest against the Government's attitude towards the Bulgarian invasion. He declared that the only *Aug. 27.* policy which could save Greece would be for the King to put himself at the head of the nation, to remove his evil counsellors, and to take into his full confidence the Prime Minister, on whom the Venizelist party were willing to bestow their complete trust. The appeal met with no response from the King, who refused to receive a Venizelist deputation, or from the anti-Venizelist parties, which continued to organize Royalist demonstrations. Meantime M. Zaimis found the task too hard for him. Surrounded by pitfalls, and staggered by the situation in Macedonia, he contented himself with doing nothing.

His hesitation played into the hands of the more extreme element among the Venizelists, and on 30th August a revolution broke out at Salonika. *Aug. 30.* The Cretan gendarmerie and the Macedonian volunteers were the chief movers, and a Committee of National Defence was formed, including Colonel Zimbrakakis, an artillery colonel, and the Venizelist deputy for Seres. After some disorder General Sarrail interposed to prevent bloodshed, and the troops of the 9th Division, quartered at Salonika, either joined the movement or allowed



themselves to be disarmed. Those officers who refused to join were allowed to go to Athens, where they were received by the King and publicly thanked for their loyalty.

Meantime, on 1st September, an Allied squadron, consisting of twenty-three warships and seven trans-

*Sept. 1.* ports, had arrived from Salonika, and anchored four miles outside the Piræus. The Allies demanded the arrest and deportation of Baron Schenk and the other German agents whose propaganda was exercising a malign influence, and the instant suppression of the Reservist Leagues.

*Sept. 9.* Enraged by these demands, a body of Reservists on 9th September demonstrated against the Allies in the gardens of the French Legation. M. Zaimis promised satisfaction for the outrage, but found himself unable to cope with the anarchical movements now breaking out everywhere

*Sept. 11.* in the land. On 11th September he handed in his resignation. He was an honourable and patriotic man, who in 1897 had concluded the peace with Turkey, and in 1906 had succeeded Prince George as High Commissioner of Crete. But his sixty-five years lay heavy on him, and his character was not masterful enough for so fierce a crisis.

The King sent for M. Dimitrakopoulos, who had been in the Venizelos Cabinet in 1912, and had since then led a small independent party. He attempted to form an ordinary political Ministry, but this the Allies were unable to accept. On 16th September

*Sept. 16.* the Theotokist deputy, M. Kalogeropoulos, was invited to form a Government. His selection included M. Roupfos, an Achæan

deputy and a violent anti-Venizelist, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs was M. Karapanos, whose sympathies had always been anti-Ally. The new Cabinet was, in fact, purely partisan, and therefore a defiance of the Note of 21st June. M. Kalogeropoulos promised the Allies a policy of "very benevolent neutrality," declared that as soon as might be he would transform his Cabinet into a "Service" Ministry, and disavowed the performance of the 4th Corps at Kavalla. But in spite of his professions the Allies refused to recognize him.

Meantime the Venizelist movement was taking on a new character. On 22nd September M. Venizelos told an interviewer at Athens: "If the King will not hear the voice of the *Sept. 22.* people, we must ourselves devise what it is best to do. I do not know what that will be; but a long continuation of the present situation would be intolerable. Already we have suffered all the agonies of a disastrous war, while remaining neutral." That same day a battalion of the Greek Revolutionary Army at Salonika left for the front. "You are going," General Zimbrakakis told them, "to fight and expel the enemy who has invaded our native soil." On the 24th a revolution broke out at *Sept. 24.* Candia, and in ten days the insurgent forces, estimated at 30,000, were in complete control of Crete. Elsewhere among the islands, at Mytilene and Samos and Chios, there were similar movements. Some of the leading Greek generals notified the King of their view that the country's interests demanded immediate war with Bulgaria. Some seventy anti-Venizelist deputies presented a memorial in favour of intervention. Late on the

night of the 24th M. Venizelos took action. He left Athens, like some new Aristides, that he might the better return. Accompanied by Admiral Kondouriotes, the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Navy, and many of his followers, he crossed to Crete. "I am leaving," he told a correspondent, "in order to proceed to the Greek islands to head the movement which has already begun for action against the Bulgarian invader. . . . Do not think I am heading a revolution in the ordinary sense of the word. The movement now beginning is in no way directed against the King or his dynasty. It is one made by those of us who can no longer stand aside and let our countrymen and our country be ravaged by the Bulgarian enemy. It is the last effort we can make to induce the King to come forth as King of the Hellenes, and to follow the path of duty in protection of his subjects. As soon as he takes the reins we, all of us, shall be glad and ready at once to follow his flag, as loyal citizens led by him against our country's foe."

On 30th September a triumvirate, consisting of M. Venizelos, Admiral Kondouriotes, and General Danglis, were chosen to direct the destinies of the National movement which was soon to become a Provisional Government.

M. Kalogeropoulos's Ministry, now the most embarrassed of phantoms, continued to plead for recognition. It even promised, under certain conditions, intervention in the war. But the Allies remained obdurate, and on 5th October

Oct. 5. M. Kalogeropoulos gave up the hopeless task. Three days later a non-party "Service" Cabinet was constructed under Professor Lambros.

It was sworn in on 9th October, and on that day M. Venizelos, after a visit to some of the islands, arrived at Salonika amid scenes of wild enthusiasm. He proceeded to form a *Oct. 9.*

Cabinet to direct the work of the National movement, and at the Conference held by the Allies at Boulogne ten days later, his Provisional Government was granted a qualified recognition. From that moment Greece was practically, though not theoretically, divided into two hostile nations. All the conditions of civil war existed, save that the Allies were interposed between the combatants.

The Lambros Ministry had still to satisfy the demands of the Powers. On 11th October the French Admiral Dartige du Fournet, *Oct. 11.* commanding the Allied Fleet, presented an ultimatum, demanding, as a precautionary measure, the handing over of the entire Greek Fleet, with the exception of three vessels, by one o'clock in the afternoon, as well as the control of the Piræus-Larissa railway. The demands were complied with, and in order to preserve order while the terms were being fulfilled, it was found necessary on the 16th to land parties of Allied bluejackets to occupy points in the capital. French officers were also appointed to assume control of the Greek police. The affair passed off without disorder, and presently the sailors were re-embarked, but the King and his Cabinet were still far from an understanding with the Powers. The demobilization went slowly on, but there was much haggling over the surrender of munitions. About 25th October the *Oct. 25.* decision of the Boulogne Conference was announced in Greece—a decision which satisfied

neither party, though both claimed that their point of view had been recognized. The Venizelist Government in Salonika at once declared war on Bulgaria in conformity with what they conceived to be their position as Allies of the Entente Powers. The Lambros Government, on the other hand, traded on its recognition by the Powers to refuse or delay the full satisfaction of the Powers' demands. One incident increased the bitterness. Two Greek ships, the *Angeliki* and the *Kiki Issaia*, were torpedoed outside the Piræus by a German submarine, and many lives were lost. Some of the passengers were Venizelists, and Germany announced her intention of sinking any ships carrying adherents of the Provisional Government. In that she was perfectly within her rights, but M. Lambros's Ministry seemed to accept the explanation as sufficient.

During November the position became daily more strained. On the 24th of the month Admiral du Fournet's patience was exhausted.

Nov. 24. He asked peremptorily for the surrender by 1st December of ten mountain batteries, and for the handing over of the remaining war material by 15th December. Failing compliance, he promised to take summary steps to enforce his orders. The long delay had bred a dangerous spirit in the Royalists, who had come to believe that they could bluff the Allies indefinitely. On the last day

Nov. 30. of November nothing had been done, and during the early morning of 1st December

Dec. 1. French, British, and Italian troops were landed at the Piræus. The King had assured the Allied commanders that no disorder need be expected, so the contingents were small.

They found the capital held in force by a Greek corps. The two sides came into collision, and with considerable bloodshed the landing-parties were borne back by weight of numbers. On this the Allied warships opened fire on the Greek positions, whereupon the King proposed an armistice, on condition that the bombardment ceased and the troops were re-embarked, offering also to hand over six batteries instead of the ten stipulated for in the Note. After some haggling the armistice was agreed upon. Meantime the Royalists, flushed by what they regarded as a victory, proceeded to insult the Allied Legations, and to rout out, maltreat, and in many cases murder the principal adherents of M. Venizelos in the city. The prisons were choked with innocent victims, and for a day or two mob rule was rampant in Athens. It was noted that many highly placed personages seemed to be personally superintending the campaign of outrage. A legend was invented later of a Venizelist plot—the common pretext of malefactors to cover their crimes.

The situation had become both farcical and tragic. The Allies had suffered a severe rebuff, and had allowed themselves to be fooled by an insignificant Court, a handful of Germanophil staff officers, and a rabble of discharged soldiers. A strict blockade of the Greek coasts was announced on 7th December. On the afternoon of 14th December an ultimatum was presented which required *Dec. 7-14.* a reply within twenty-four hours. The Note demanded the withdrawal of the entire Greek force from Thessaly, and the transfer to the Peloponessus of a large proportion of the Greek army. Failing compliance, the Allied Ministers were instructed to

leave Greece, and a state of war would begin. The Greek Government, realizing that this time the Allies were not to be trifled with, accepted the ultimatum, but after their fashion began to quibble about the construction of the terms.

On 31st December a second Allied Note was delivered, containing their demands for military guar-

*Dec. 31.* antees, and for reparation on account of the events of 1st and 2nd December. The Greek forces outside the Peloponessus were to be reduced to the number absolutely required to maintain order, and the surplus disbanded. All armaments and munitions beyond the amount required for this reduced force were to be transported to the Peloponessus, as well as all machine guns and artillery of the Greek army. The situation thus established was to be maintained as long as the Allied Governments deemed it necessary. Civilians were forbidden to carry arms, and all Reservist meetings were prohibited north of the Isthmus of Corinth. All political prisoners were to be immediately released, and the sufferers from the events of 1st and 2nd December were to be indemnified. The general responsible for the action of the 1st Corps on these dates was to be superseded. Finally the Greek Government was to apologize to the Allied Ministers, and the British, French, Italian, and Russian flags were to be formally saluted in a public square in Athens in the presence of the Minister of War and the assembled garrison. Meantime the blockade would continue till every jot and tittle of the demands had been fulfilled.

Again the Athens Government quibbled, adopting the method of pleading known to English law as

“confession and avoidance.” The anti-Venizelist persecution went on, and the Reservists continued their meetings. An evasive reply was delivered, and this brought a second ultimatum, based upon the decisions reached at the Rome Conference. King Constantine judged shrewdly that he had now arrived at the end of the Allied patience. He accordingly accepted their terms, and on January 20, 1917, the transfer of the Greek forces to the Peloponessus began. On 24th January *Jan. 20-* the Greek Government formally apolo- *29, 1917.* gized to the Allied Ministers. On Monday, 29th January, in front of the Zappeion, the Allied flags were solemnly saluted by soldiers and sailors representing all the Greek units left in Athens. The Reservist societies at the same time were dissolved by a legislative decree.

The Allied handling of the Greek problem had never been brilliant, but during the last months of 1916 it seemed to most observers in the West to reach a height of fatuity not often attained by mortal statecraft. Blunders there were beyond doubt, but few of those who indulged in facile criticism recognized the extreme difficulty in which the Allies were placed. Their one object was to win the war, to prevent any addition to the German resources, and to avoid burdening themselves with troublesome problems not germane to their military purpose. A united Greece as an ally was beyond hope: the blunders of 1915 had made that impossible. The most they could hope for was some arrangement which would protect their Salonika army from an assault in rear. They wished to keep Greece quies-



cent, to avoid having to fight a campaign in Thessaly or Attica as well as in Macedonia. It was too often forgotten by their critics that a state of civil war in Greece would be more troublesome from a military point of view than a Greek declaration of war against the Allies, for it would not be possible to use the fleets as a card in the game. On the top of their grave preoccupations the Allies did not wish to have the ordering of the domestic affairs of a country none too easy to order.

This desire was intelligible and politic. The Allied policy in its details may well be criticized—ultimata which were not ultimate, pin-pricks which did not pierce the skin, Admiral du Fournet's landing-parties which were so ill-judged and ineffective. But when one plays a trimming game one is apt to wear the appearance of inefficiency. The Allies sought to keep the peace at almost any cost; they accepted two *de facto* Greek Governments; at the Rome conference they tried to stereotype the arrangement and prevent either side from increasing its power. The whole situation was farcical, but let us recognize that the policy in the main succeeded. At the cost of the loss of every kind of international dignity official Greece was kept in an uneasy neutrality.

There were many who advocated a more heroic course. M. Venizelos, they said, was the friend of the Allies, and the declared enemy of the Teutonic League. He had 30,000 men under arms, and, if allowed to make a levy in Greece, might soon have 100,000. Let the Allies do as Admiral Noel did in Crete—train their ships' guns on the Royal Palace, and compel an abdication. Let Venizelos

be brought to Athens as Regent, and the Provisional Government established there. Let King Constantine retire to the Peloponessus with his following, and let the Isthmus of Corinth be an impassable barrier between north and south. Or, if such things were impossible, let Venizelos be acknowledged as the true ruler of Greece, the Allied Legations removed to one of the islands, and Athens and South Greece be left to dree their weird under a strict blockade. If either course were taken, it was argued, we should have every Hellene worthy of the name fighting actively on the Allied side, and the King and his counsellors reduced to the impotence which was their proper destiny.

The objection to these heroic courses did not lie in any tenderness to the royal cause. King Constantine, trebly forsworn, deserved small consideration. It reposed on two uncontroverted facts. In the first place, the Allies were not yet agreed in their estimate of M. Venizelos. France was his passionate defender, Britain his staunch admirer; but many elements in Italy looked askance on one whose ambitions for his country might presently conflict with Italian aspirations, and the Government then in power in Russia was naturally hostile to the man who had challenged a monarchy. In the second place, the Venizelists were by no means the whole of the Greek nation; by this time it was not even certain that they were the larger part. Too much was made of the Germanophilism of anti-Venizelist Greece. Except in the Court, a handful of politicians and the General Staff, there was little love for Germany. The opponents of Venizelos were partly his political opponents—the narrow politicians who

could not look beyond parochial ends ; they were partly the middle classes, who were afraid of bold ventures ; they were very largely the Reservists, who strongly objected to be made to fight. They were all the creeping things that infest a court. They were simple Conservatives, with a leaning to royalty. They were the ignorant and superstitious peasants who had that semi-religious veneration for a king which is common in the Orthodox Church. Anti-Venizelism included the baser elements in the nation ; but it involved also elements, narrow and self-centred, indeed, but wholly respectable and honest. M. Venizelos drew to his standard all that was bold and generous and far-seeing in Hellenic life ; but such men are rarely the majority in a nation. He preached a counsel of perfection which was a stumbling-block to commonplace minds. For the Allies at that moment to have definitely espoused his cause and set him up in power, would have rent the nation in two and delivered it over to civil war. If peace at all costs had to be preserved, a temporizing policy was the only course left to the embarrassed Allied statesmen.

A recognition of this truth need not blind us to the greatness of M. Venizelos's part and the extraordinary dignity and resolution of his character. He was called to a harassing work—to make bricks without straw, to make war under bonds, to govern and at the same time to serve. He could not attack the dynasty, since he sought above all things Hellenic unity ; but he had to wait in silence while that dynasty oppressed and murdered his supporters. He had to content himself with a half-hearted recognition by the Allies. He had to submit to restric-

tions on the natural increment of his following. He had to obey often what he thought was the starkest folly. Yet at all times he took the larger view, and showed a patience and a noble absence of vanity which few leaders in history have equalled.

"I have tried," to quote his own words, "not to cause any difficulties for my friends. I am told to evacuate Katerini—I evacuate Katerini. I am told to abandon Cerigo—I abandon Cerigo. A neutral zone is imposed on me—I respect the neutral zone. I am asked to bring my movement to a standstill—I bring it to a standstill." He was above all things a practical statesman, never losing sight of the end, but ready to change his means as the occasion demanded. He had seen unmoved the failure of his Cretan rising in 1897, and had promptly set himself to achieve his purpose by other methods. He had served the dynasty when Greece needed it; he was ready to oppose it when it played false to Greece. A passionate patriot, there was nothing parochial in his love for his country; he saw it as part of Europe, and no man was ever a better European. Others have had imagination and adventurous courage, but few have joined to these traits the surest *flair* for the practicable and an unearthly patience. The vision and the fact, the poetry and the prose of life—when they find a rare union in a single human soul, they provide a combination which in the long run is as irresistible as the forces of Nature.

## CHAPTER CXXII.

### THE FRENCH ADVANCE AT VERDUN.

The Lure of Verdun—Condition of the Battlefield—Importance of the Winter Fighting—General Mangin—The French Dispositions—The Enemy Front—The German Plans—The French Preparations—The French Objective—The Attack of 24th October—Its Success—Capture of Fort Douaumont—The Position on the Right—Fort Vaux carried—Vaux and Damloup Villages occupied—Results—The Second Phase—The German Line on 14th December—The French Dispositions and Objectives—The Attack of 15th December—Nivelle's Prediction—Capture of Vacherauville, Côte du Poivre, and Louvemont—Capture of Bezonvaux—The Struggle for Les Charmettes—The Charge of the *Pieds Gelés*—Summary of Results—Verdun France's Answer to Germany's Peace Proposals.

**I**T is a noticeable feature of great campaigns that certain places arrogate to themselves an importance which is not their due under the strict laws of strategy. They may have acquired this significance for military reasons, but they are apt to retain it when those reasons have gone. A spell hangs over them which sways unconsciously the minds of men. Once they may have been fortresses or sally-ports or ganglia of communications; but the fortress may be battered to earth, the sally-port blocked, and the routes of traffic diverted, and they will still possess an illogical but compelling power. The tides of battle may flow in far other channels,

but neither side can cut itself loose from the old battleground. Ypres was such a case, and Verdun was another. To Germany the latter was in very truth a *damnosa haereditas*. Her success had been so triumphantly advertised, that for very shame's sake she was fain to keep up the show of consummating it. When the Somme offensive was unleashed, she still continued her efforts to break the Froideterre-Fleury-Souville line of defence. She tried desperately on 11th July, and again on 1st August. On 21st July the Imperial Crown Prince told his troops: "The French count on our relinquishing our pressure on Verdun now that they have begun their attack on the Somme. We will show them that they are deceived." But the showing did not come. August saw Fleury firmly in French hands, and with the abortive attempt of 3rd September to advance from the Bois de Chapitre the enemy's impetus seemed to be exhausted. By that date the grim Picardy struggle had drawn to it every spare battery and battalion on his Western front.

Germany would fain have let the Meuse uplands fall into the stagnation of the Vosges and the Aisne, but she was not permitted to cry out of the contest she had set. For France had taken up the gage in deadly earnest. For her, too, Verdun had become a test of prowess, a palladium not to be valued by common standards. It was not enough to have stood fast; the time had come to advance. No triumphs on the Somme could wholly divert her eyes from that awful battlefield where she had won a glory not excelled by the victories of Austerlitz and Marengo. Verdun was the hallowed soil on

which, above all other spots, the enemy must reap the bitter harvest he had sown. In such a resolve there was something antique and noble, some touch of that far-reaching imagination and poetry with which France has so often astonished the world. It was a strange land on which to set one's affections. The map might show the names of woods and villages and ravines, but these features were no longer there. From Fort Souville, looking north, the eye saw nothing but desert, pitted and hummocked as by the eruption of gigantic earthworms. No tree or masonry broke the desolation. The very gullies and glens, the quarries and the crests, had been tortured out of their old shapes. There were hundreds of thousands of men in the landscape, burrowing below that fretted soil, but there was no sign of them. Only the naked ridges of Douaumont, Froideterre, and Vaux were left of what had once been a pleasantly diversified countryside. But in every square yard of that landscape lay France's dead, and she was determined that over the graves of her sons her armies should march to victory.

The fighting at Verdun from October 24 to December 19, 1916, may be regarded as a distinct and complete episode in the campaign. Beyond weakening the enemy's man-power and *moral* it had no direct bearing upon the main strategy. The terrain was self-contained, and the offensive—conducted as it was in wintry weather—did not spread to other areas. But as an episode it may well be regarded by the future historian as one of the greatest in the war. It was a thing perfect alike in conception and execution. For ages to come the tactician will study every detail of those eight weeks as he studies

the tactics of Marlborough and Jackson. At Verdun all that had been learned during the two years of war, and in especial the lessons of the Somme, was put into practice. The use of standing and creeping barrages, the new trench weapons, the art of consolidating ground, the *nettoyage* of captured trenches, the relation of missile to cold steel—in these and a thousand other problems the Allied view was brilliantly vindicated. The test was a hard one, for the enemy was prepared; he was superior in numbers to the actual attacking force; and the advance was a frontal one made over a country as bald and exposed as the granite top of a mountain. In this place it is impossible to write the full tactical story, but even from a sketch the reader may gather something of its superb audacity and precision.

A new figure enters into the list of Verdun's defenders. Petain had held the fort in the dark days of the spring of 1916, and Nivelle had borne the burden of the long summer battles. The latter still commanded the Second Army from the Argonne to Lorraine, but the coming attack was entrusted to a group of divisions under Charles Mangin. A man of fifty, Mangin was one of that great brotherhood of Colonial generals which included Joffre, Gallieni, Lyautey, Gouraud, and Passaga. Born of a distinguished Lorraine family, which for generations had been eminent in the law and the army, he had served since his twenty-fourth year in Tonkin and in every part of Northern Africa, and had been one of Marchand's companions in the great march from the Congo to the Nile. He had made



himself the first authority on colonial campaigning, and had written a famous book on the fighting stuff which France possessed in her dark-skinned subjects. He was at home at the outbreak of the Great War, and was given command of the 8th Brigade in the Fifth Army, that army which took the shock of the first German onset at Charleroi. At the Marne he led the 5th Division in General Hache's 3rd Corps; he was heavily engaged at the Battle of the Aisne; he was in the Artois fighting in the summer of 1915; and early in 1916 was in the Frise area south of the Somme. At the end of March 1916, he came with his division to Verdun, and led his men to the recapture of La Caillette Wood, and on 22nd May to the glorious and short-lived reconquest of Douaumont. In June he received a corps, the new 3rd Colonial Corps, and was given charge of the crucial sector on the right bank of the Meuse. In appearance he was a typical soldier of France, with his dark, stiff thatch of hair, his skin tanned by African suns, his iron jaw, his piercing black eyes that held both humour and fire. There was thought in his face as well as ardour and resolution, and he had that first requisite of great captains, imagination and an insight into the hearts of his troops. No man could speak more appositely that word which nerves the soldier to desperate ventures.

Since the land from Haudromont to Damloup was without cover, and was commanded by the enemy on the high ground at Douaumont and Fort Vaux, it was clear that no series of local actions would avail. Any position won by these would be at once rendered untenable, and only a grand assault pushed forward to the main objectives would serve

the French purpose. But since this would mean a frontal attack over difficult country, it demanded for its success the most meticulous preparation. Mangin proposed to make the attempt with three divisions in line—three divisions which had already held the sector and knew every inch of it. These were the division under General Guyot de Salins, composed of Zouaves, Colonial infantry, and those Moroccan and Algerian troops which had first won their spurs at Dixmude, and in August 1914 had retaken Fleury ; and the divisions of General Passaga and General de Lardemelle, composed of Chasseurs and infantry of the line from every district of France. One division was taken out of the line at the end of August, and the other two at the end of September, and withdrawn to a back area for training and rest. That training was carried out on a piece of ground modelled to reproduce the actual terrain, and in especial an exact counterpart of Fort Douaumont was constructed, so that every man of the attacking force would know the work consigned to him. Moreover, the training included practice in the new tactics of assault learned on the Somme, which had not yet been tried in the Verdun area. As regards *matériel*, there was a great increase in batteries and stores of shells, and much road-making and laying of light railways to insure the rapid passage of munitions. Two divisions were left in the sector of assault, and for twenty days in the incessant rain of October these had a heavy time preparing trenches, dug-outs, headquarter posts, dressing-stations, and cover for the guns.

In October the enemy held the front between Avocourt and Les Eparges with fifteen divisions; of

which eight were in first line. These were, from west to east, the 14th Reserve and the 13th Reserve of the 7th Reserve Corps; the 25th Reserve, the 54th, the 34th, the 9th, the 33rd Reserve, and the 50th. Between Haudromont and Damloup Battery he had twenty-one battalions in front line, seven in support, and ten in reserve. After the battle the Germans, following their familiar practice, announced that they had long resolved to evacuate the positions they had lost, and were in the act of doing so when the French attacked. Captured documents told a different tale. One commander enlarged on the immense importance of Douaumont, and the necessity of safeguarding the German hold on it. An army order of General von Lochow, dated 18th September, enjoined the strengthening of the front and the preparation of reserve positions. As late as 23rd October we find the German commanders perfectly alive to the imminence of a French attack, and making plans to meet it, while urging their men to hold their ground at all costs. Mangin's intentions were well known to his opponents, and his attack had nothing of the nature of a surprise. They had no inclination to cede anything, least of all the vital Douaumont; and they believed that they were strong enough to beat him off, for on the ground they had at least 130 batteries and greater numbers of men.

On Saturday, 21st October, the French guns opened, directed by kite balloons and airplanes, in the one brief spell of clear weather which  
*Oct. 21.* October showed. Methodically from hour to hour the enemy lines were pounded to atoms. It will be seen from the attached map that

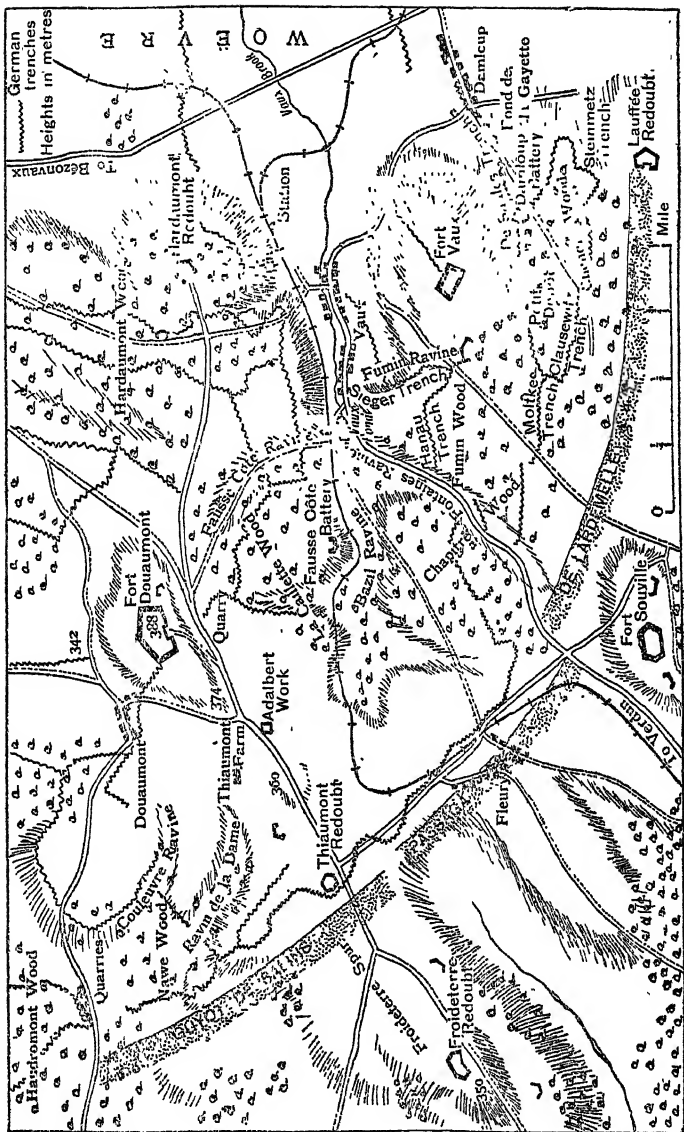
the Verdun area, like the Somme, was losing its old nomenclature, and becoming a tangle of uncouth trench names. The enemy had been busy since midsummer, and had a vast number of new trenches—on the skirts of the woods of Chenois and Chapitre, and the neck of ridge which links the Souville and Douaumont uplands, and in and around the quarries of Haudromont. Every little ravine which cut the slopes had become a nest of dug-outs. On all these new works the French artillery played night and day, till the quarries and gullies were choked with rubble. On Sunday, the 23rd, a heavy shell landed in Douaumont Fort, and there was the glare of a great fire. That same day a feint of the infantry obliged the enemy to reveal his new batteries, and many of them were marked down and shelled. That night a captured German pigeon message showed that things were in a bad way in the enemy's front line. Instant relief was begged for, and a hundred deserters came over, including an officer, who was rash enough to prophesy. "You will never retake Douaumont," he said, "any more than we shall take Verdun."

On the 23rd the three divisions of assault moved up to take their places in the trenches of departure, relieving the muddy and weary troops who for three weeks had been preparing the ground. The frontage was, roughly, seven kilometres, and the French position extended from the Wood of Haudromont just south of the Quarries, skirting the Wood of Nawé, covering Fleury village, to the south edge of the Chemin Wood north of Laufée Fort. It had been decided to conduct the operation in two stages. The first objective was a

line formed by the Haudromont Quarries, the ridge north of the Lady's Ravine, the trench north of Thiaumont Farm, the Fausse Côte Battery, the north-east side of Chapitre Wood, the Viola Trench in the Fumin Wood, and the Steinmetz Trench before Damloup Battery. After consolidating on this line the troops would advance to their final objective—the ridge north of the Couleuvre Ravine, Douaumont village and fort, the north and east sides of the Fausse Côte Ravine, the pond of Vaux, the Siegen Trench west of the Fumin Ravine, and Damloup Battery. On the French left was the division of General Guyot de Salins, directed upon Haudromont, Thiaumont, and Douaumont; in the centre General Passaga's division, moving upon the Wood of La Caillette; and on the right de Lardemelle's division, with before it the Fumin, Chapitre, and Chenois woods, and the battery of Damloup. The 11th Regiment of Infantry supported the extreme left of Guyot de Salins, and the 30th Regiment the right of de Lardemelle. Between the divisions there was a noble emulation. "On your left," Passaga told his men, "you have the famous Africans. You are disputing for the honour of retaking Fort Douaumont. Let them know that they can count on us to support them, to open the door for them, and to share their glory."

By the morning of Tuesday, 24th October, while the guns still thundered their last messages, the clear

*Aug. 24.* weather had gone, and a thick autumn fog hung over the uplands. The valley of the Meuse was hidden, and even the next ridge a quarter of a mile away. The hour fixed for the assault was late, to enable the light to improve; and



## The French Counter-attack at Verdun, October 1916.

at ten minutes to twelve, when the troops went over the parapets, the haze was lifting, and the French airplanes were droning in the sky. Through the muddy fringes of the old woods and along the back of Froideterre went the three divisions, methodically, calmly, and with perfect certitude. It was like the ground round cavalry pickets where every yard is churned and trodden. But here it was as if the trampling had been done by cohorts of mammoths and mastodons.

Success came at once. At Mangin's headquarters Generals Joffre, Nivelle, and Petain had arrived to watch the fortunes of the day, and presently through the raw October weather came telephone messages of a surprising and economical triumph. It was clear that the plan of the two stages must be foregone, for the incomparable three divisions were making one mouthful of the whole objective. Hordes of grey-clad prisoners came running back through the mist till, to the troops in reserve, it seemed that the men surrendering must far outnumber the attackers. At half-past two in the afternoon the wind rose and dispersed the haze, and from the observation posts near Souville the French infantry were seen moving up the slopes of Douaumont. At three came the news from the aircraft that they were in the fort. Before the dark fell every objective had been gained, and over 4,500 prisoners, including 130 officers, were on their way to the French rear.

Let us examine the progress of the day. On the extreme left the 11th Regiment attacked the Haudromont Quarries, which had been turned into a gigantic fort. The place was encircled and mastered after a

fierce struggle with grenades in the main quarry, and an enemy counter-attack beaten off. On their right the left wing of Guyot de Salins moved through the relics of the Wood of Nawé on the Ravin de la Dame as their first objective, and the Couleuvre Ravine as their second. These two gullies lie on the southern side of the depression into which the Douaumont-Bras road dips after leaving the tableland. The 4th Regiment of Zouaves and the Colonial *tirailleurs* had won their second objective by two o'clock, and patrols had pushed as far as the Helly Ravine north of the Bras road. In the deeper dug-outs some of the enemy remained, ignorant of what was happening above ground. That night a French sergeant wandering among the shell-holes was taken prisoner by a party of Germans, and pushed into a subterranean chamber where dinner was being served. He asked where he was, and was told "The Ravin de la Dame." In return, he told them that Thiaumont and Douaumont had fallen, and had the satisfaction of taking back to his line 200 prisoners and six machine guns.

Guyot de Salins's right had a like success. A Moroccan battalion carried Thiaumont fort and farm, and a Zouave battalion coming after them flung themselves on Douaumont village. There now remained only Douaumont Fort, a grim hump on the crest seen dimly through the fog. Its conquest had been reserved for two battalions of the Moroccan Colonial Regiment. One, under Commandant Modat, launched the assault, and carried the first objective. Then they halted to organize, and through them passed Commandant Croll's men, whose duty it was to turn the defence of the fort.



on right and left. Behind them came the spear-head, the battalion under Commandant Nicolay, who were destined for the actual storm. They were all picked men, and for weeks had been practised upon this very problem, till each man knew every yard of the objective like his own name. For a moment, but only for a moment, they lost direction in the mist. Then the brume opened, and disclosed their goal; and, after a second's halt, while each man gazed with reverence at a place so famous and so long in mind, they swept upon it through the German barrage, one of their own airplanes flying low above them. They scrambled over the fosse, carried the outer works, and bombed the remaining garrison out of the chambers. It was only three hours since they had left their parapets.

The centre division, under Passaga, had the longest road to travel. Advancing from Fleury, they had to cross the Bazil Ravine, where ran the railway from Verdun to Vaux, and beyond that the Wood of La Caillette, honeycombed with trenches. They had a difficult starting-place, for at that point the enemy front formed a small salient, and accordingly the rate of advance of the different units had to be nicely calculated. General Ancelin, commanding the left brigade, fell early in the day, and was replaced by Colonel Hutin, who had won fame in the Cameroons fighting. In fifty-eight minutes the division had attained its two objectives, and held a line from just east of Fort Douaumont to the slopes north of the Fausse Côte Ravine and west of Vaux pond. There, as the mist lengthened, they watched with wild excitement the Colonials on their left carry Douaumont.

The fiercest fighting fell to the right division, under de Lardemelle. The shoulder of hill crowned by Vaux fort was a difficult problem in itself, and it had been defended by the enemy with a perfect spider's web of trenches. The terrain was bounded on the left by the Souville-Vaux road descending the Fontaines Ravine, and on the right by the Damloup Battery on the steep overhanging the Woëvre. The intervening space was occupied with the debris of three woods and a number of little ravines. The Germans had constructed a strong front line from just north of Souville to the La Gayette Ridge above Damloup, including the trenches named Moltke, Clausewitz, Mudra, Steinmetz, and Werder. Behind was an intermediate line with as points in it the work called Petit Dépôt and the Battery of Damloup. The second line, a kilometre or more behind the front line, ran from the place where the Fontaines Ravine begins to open into the Vaux valley, and included the trenches of Hanan, Siegen, De Saales, and Damloup village. The ground was held at the moment by the 50th German Division. De Lardemelle's men were troops of the line and Chasseurs, for the most part contingents brought from Dauphiné and Savoy. Their first rush took them into most of the first objective; but Clausewitz Trench held out till three o'clock. The intermediate line followed, but it was eight o'clock before it was all captured, the Petit Dépôt being the last point to fall. Early in the day Damloup Battery had been brilliantly carried by the 30th Regiment. But the second line was not touched, and all through the night there was fierce fighting, where the Savoyards of the 230th Regiment were engaged in the Wood of

Fumin and the east side of the Fontaines Ravine. In such a war as this night brought no peace to either side, and through the frozen mud and the darkness the battle continued. The combat had now centred itself on the Vaux Ridge. On the morn-

*Oct. 25.* ing of Wednesday, the 25th, the last survivors of the garrison of Douaumont surrendered; and next day there were heavy German counter-attacks against the fort, which were broken up by the French fire. But the line remained stationary, while on the Vaux Ridge it was creeping inexorably round the ruins which in June the gallantry of Raynal could not save from German hands.

The great struggle was for the German second line—the trenches Gotha, Siegen, and de Saales, and Damloup village; for if these fell the fort of

*Oct. 26.* Vaux must go. On the 26th they were bitterly contested, and that day a French patrol got close to the south and east angles of the fort itself. Another reconnaissance descended the northern slope of the Fumin Wood, and found touch with Passaga's right at Vaux pond. The weather had become foul again, and it was clear that a continued attack on the fort by de Lardemelle would be too high a trial. Accordingly the troops were slightly retired, and the guns opened in a new and furious bombardment of the bald hill-top. On

*Oct. 28.* the 28th General Andlauer's division relieved de Lardemelle, and Arlabosse relieved Passaga.

On the morning of Thursday, 2nd November,

*Nov. 2.* the French observers reported that part of the fort, where the explosions had been most frequent, was in process of evacuation

by the enemy. When night fell a company of the 118th Regiment went forward to reconnoitre the ground beyond the fort, while a company of the 298th—Raynal's old regiment—were told off to enter the ruins. They had some difficulty in finding a way in, so wholesale had been the destructive work of the French guns; but when they effected an entrance, they found that the garrison had not stayed upon the order of their going. Large quantities of military supplies, not to speak of a recent army order enjoining the strengthening of the defence, gave the lie to the German tale that the evacuation had been decided on long before, and that the French had been forcing an open door. Fort Vaux had been claimed by the enemy as far back as 9th March, and had finally fallen on 7th June. Its recapture forced the Germans in this section off the heights into the marshy plain, and, combined with the retaking of Douaumont, gave the French the vantage in observation.

Next day, Friday, 3rd November, Andlauer's division pushed beyond Vaux fort to the edge of the plateau overhanging Vaux glen. On the Saturday they cleared the Germans off the northern slopes, crossing at one point the Vaux-Damloup road; but the enemy still held the Hardaumont Ridge in strength. Later in the day Arlabosse's division pressed in from the Fumin Wood on the west side of the hamlet, and Andlauer's men on the eastern side carried their line well up the Hardaumont slopes. Vaux village was now in French hands. At the same time, on the right, the village of Damloup was won back. In ten days Mangin had wiped out the German gains

during eight months of battle. The French line now stood as it had stood on February 26, 1916, the sixth day of the Crown Prince's offensive. At a cost of under 6,000 casualties he had taken more than that number of German prisoners, many guns, and vast quantities of supplies, and had put out of action the equivalent of two enemy divisions.

Before the first phase was concluded Nivelle had made his plan for a second and bolder effort. The great October attack had not been pushed to the limits of the French strength. The troops had been deliberately halted, in accordance with Nivelle's cautious plan, when they might have gone farther. The French command took an artistic pride in their actions, rounding off neatly their set objectives, but not straggling beyond them; and, moreover, they desired to fight economically, and operations prolonged at random are costly. But the situation after the fall of Douaumont and Vaux had certain drawbacks. The enemy had lost his principal observation posts, but he had others nearly as good, such as Hill 342, on the Côte du Poivre, and Hill 378, between Louvemont and the farm of Chambrettes. The Louvemont plateau too, with its hollows and deep-cut ravines, gave them good gun positions, and so long as they held it the access to Douaumont was meagre and difficult. To complete the October victories, it was necessary to push the Germans back from the high ground between Louvemont and Bezonvaux.

The enemy line after the fall of Douaumont lay from the Meuse, just south of Vacherauville, and covering that village, along the south side of the crest of

the Côte du Poivre ; through the Wood of Haudromont on the north side of the glen where ran the Bras-Douaumont road ; just north of Douaumont fort and village, and along the south slopes of the Wood of Hardaumont, above Vaux, to the flats of the Woëvre. It was a strong line, and the Germans, alarmed by the events of October, had greatly strengthened it. The front bristled with redoubts, many new trenches had been dug, and advantage had been taken of the ravines to form strong points to take any advance in flank. The task of the attackers was far harder than in October. Then, once the first-line crust had been broken, the affair was to a large extent over, and the troops promenaded to victory ; now there was a series of crusts, each one of which must be pierced by stern fighting. The Germans held the ten kilometres of front with five divisions : from west to east, the 14th and the 14th Reserve from Westphalia, the 39th from Alsace and Wurtemberg, the 10th from Posen and the 39th Bavarian Reserve. This last had a curious history. Composed mostly of elderly reservists, it had long been dwelling happily and ingloriously in the Alsace sector. But the heart of its commander, one Krueger, panted for military glory ; and after much wire-pulling he succeeded in getting a transfer to the Verdun front, where he had the ill luck to fall in with Passaga and his merry men. The Germans held their first line with fifteen battalions—between 8,000 and 9,000 bayonets ; they had the same number in immediate reserve, and the rest in quarters within easy call. Four other divisions—the Guard Ersatz, the 30th, the 5th, and the 21st Reserves—were at hand in support.

Mangin had four divisions of attack—those of Passaga and Guyot de Salins, which had come back out of the line for rest at the end of October ; that of Garnier du Plessis, which had been one of those to bear the brunt of the spring battles of Verdun ; and that of Muteau, which was new to the terrain. As before the earlier operations, all were trained upon a model of the ground they were destined to win. Nothing was left to chance ; every detail was scrutinized, and every contingency foreseen. The troops, already a *corps d'élite*, were strung to the highest pitch of enthusiasm by memories of past successes, and the consciousness that France waited with hushed breath on the issue of the new adventure. Their commander knew how to speak the decisive word. "From the heights of Hardaumont," said Passaga, "the Boche still sees a corner of that famous place where he thought to decide the fate of our country and of civilization. To you has been given the honour of winning that height. . . . You will push your bayonets well beyond it. You will add to the glory of your flag by the lustre of another unforgettable day." Muteau told his troops, still unentered in the Verdun contest : "You will justify the honour that has been done you. The enemy still clings to the Côte du Poivre, whence he insults Verdun with his greedy eyes. You will hurl him off it. *A l'heure dite, haut les cœurs ! Et en avant pour notre chère France !*"

The beginning of December saw ill weather—high winds, rains, and flurries of snow. The artillery preparation, due to start on the 2nd, had to be postponed for a week. But on the 11th the air was clear, though the skies were still grey and

threatening. Winter warfare can only be conducted in the pauses of storms, and a commander must snatch any interval of calm. At dawn on that day the French airplanes were humming over the plateau, and the guns opened. *Dec. 11.* It was a moment most critical and dramatic in the history of the war. Germany was launching her peace proposals, and next day the Imperial Chancellor told the world that his country had given proof of her indestructible power by gaining victories over adversaries superior in numbers, and that her unshakable line still resisted the incessant attacks of her foes. Some answer was needed, and France was preparing one more eloquent than any diplomatic note. A change, too, had come about in the French High Command. Nivelle, the commander of the Second Army, was nominated Commander-in-Chief in the West, and this was his last fight before he took up his new duties. Into it he had put every atom of his vigorous energies and all the power of his admirable brain. He told the Cabinet in Paris of his plans, and forecasted with amazing accuracy the extent of his successes. "Prepare," he said, "to receive good news. Before the evening of December 15th I will send you a telegram giving details of this and that success." No operation of war was ever more dramatically staged, and it is a proof of the complete confidence of Nivelle in his troops that he, the last of men to tempt fate, should have so boldly prophesied.

The grand bombardment began on the 11th, but ceased during the afternoon owing to bad weather. During the 12th, 13th, and 14th it continued—a far more difficult operation than that



of October. The short winter days, the fog, and

*Dec. 12-* the rain made aerial observation uncertain, and on the air depends the virtue

*14.* of the guns. The target, too, was less easy than in October, for the enemy's front was cunningly grooved and recessed in the maze of ravines and little glens. The French were suffering also from what had been our greatest obstacle in the winter's fighting on the Somme—the necessity of bringing up ammunition across an old battlefield. All the ground between Souville and Douaumont had been fought over, and though miles of new roads and light railways had been constructed, the transport of heavy shells was an arduous labour. Nevertheless, from the 11th onward, the strong points on the German front were most scientifically blotted out—the Hardaumont Wood, and the ruined villages of Vacherauville, Louvemont, and Bezonvaux, now turned into underground fortresses. The French barrage cut off all communication, and for three days the German defence, cowering in dug-outs under a ceaseless tornado, went hungry. Deserters dribbled across the line—broken men who fled from the wrath to come.

Friday, the 15th, dawned grey and chilly, with snow showers and a lowering sky, but without the baffling fog. The French divisions of attack crossed their parapets at ten in the morning.

*Dec. 15.* On the left Muteau's division had for its main objective the hill called 342 on the Côte du Poivre; next to it Guyot de Salins struck at Louvemont; on his right Garnier du Plessis had the area between Chambrettes Farm and Bezonvaux; while Passaga, on his right flank, aimed at









the fortified labyrinth which was once the Wood of Hardaumont. The task of the divisions varied much in difficulty. The whole movement was a swing forward of the right wing pivoting on the Côte du Poivre; so that while Muteau on the left had less than a mile, though a difficult mile, to cover, the troops on the right had a two-mile advance before them.

Muteau had an instant success. His men, infantry of the line, were for the most part reservists with thirty years behind them. On the extreme left General Woillemont's brigade attacked Vacherauville and the crest of the Côte du Poivre. At seven minutes past ten they had won the crest, and five minutes after the 112th Regiment was in the village. Twenty minutes later the crowning position of Hill 342 was carried, and the intricate German defences, elaborated during eight weeks, had passed into other hands, together with 1,200 prisoners. That fierce half-hour was one of the most brilliant strokes of the campaign. Nothing stopped the fury of the assault, not uncut wire or machine guns in pockets or unforeseen strongholds; that thunderous charge swept aside all hindrances like stubble. Vacherauville had been made a strong place, but its strength was futile against the swift encircling tactics of the French and their tempestuous surge inwards. On Muteau's right the brigade under General Steinmetz which took Hill 342 evoked the admiration of Guyot de Salins's proud Colonials, who were stern judges of an assault. "Tell your commander, with our compliments," so ran the message, "that for linesmen that was jolly well done."

East of Muteau the Moroccan brigade of the Colonials attacked from the Wood of Haudromont against Louvemont village, which lies in the slight dip of the plateau where runs the highway from Vacherauville to Ornes. There Nicolay's battalion, the victors of Douaumont, had a desperate struggle in the first-line trenches, called Prague and Pomerania; and there fell Nicolay himself, shot through the forehead by a sniper who picked out the tall figure of the commandant. His death maddened his followers, and Louvemont, encircled on three sides, speedily fell. The right of the division was no less successful. In the ravine of Helly the Zouaves repeated their October exploit in the Ravin de la Dame. In three-quarters of an hour they were on the crest of Hill 378—after Douaumont, the highest point of the neighbourhood; and at twenty minutes past one the farm of Les Chambrettes was in their hands.

On their right the division of Garnier du Plessis had a long and stubborn task. Their first difficulty was with the work called the Camp of Attila, at the head of the Helly Ravine, which was stubbornly defended by a Grenadier battalion from Posen, whose officers themselves served the machine guns, and whose colonel fought most gallantly to the end. One part of the division was able to push on almost to the edge of the Wood of Caurières, where they were in touch with the Zouaves in Les Chambrettes. But the rest, after brilliantly carrying the enemy's first line, were held up in the second by the trenches called Weimar and Chamnitz, which lined the crest on the west side of the Hassoule Ravine, which descends to Bezonvaux glen. This position also checked the advance of Passaga, who in the morn-

ing had brilliantly carried the trenches and ravines in the Wood of Hardaumont. When the December dark fell the French line was as follows:—From Vacherauville to Louvemont the whole Côte du Poivre was in their hands, except a pocket on the crest which was reduced during the night. East of Louvemont they held the higher ground as far as Les Charmettes Farm, from which, owing to the enemy bombardment, they had slightly withdrawn. Thence the front curved sharply back, running through the woods of La Vauche and Hardaumont, and reaching the edge of the uplands just south of the little fort of Bezonvaux.

Next day, 16th December, it was the task of du Plessis's division to make good the Weimar and Chamnitz trenches. Till this happened, *Dec. 16.* Passaga on the right was held, and the Zouaves of de Salins at Les Chambrettes were awkwardly enfiladed. Indeed the latter formed a sharp salient, and all night long had to struggle against attacks from the Wood of Caurières. Little could be done in the darkness, for the moon was in its last quarter, and the blasts of snow made the obscurity profound. At the first light the advance began. Two battalions of Passaga's right brigade forced their way into Bezonvaux village, while a battalion on his left, moving by way of the Wolf's Ridge, took in flank the Deux-Ponts Trench, which was a continuation of the more famous Weimar. Large numbers of prisoners were taken; but the French had no time to look after them, and their multitude of captives was almost their undoing. For some six hundred, wandering back without an escort, and seeing that the attacking force at this



point was a mere handful, recovered their arms, and, skulking in trenches and in shell-holes, opened fire from the back. The Chasseurs were between two fires, and disaster might have followed but for the fact that the Zouaves on the left were busy executing a similar flanking movement, and had carried the Les Rousses Ridge in the rear of the Weimar Trench. They saw what was happening farther east, and dispatched a company to the aid of the hard-pressed Chasseurs. The Weimar defence was now hopelessly turned, and du Plessis's men swept over the debatable ground, through the Wood of Caurières, and carried the line to the scarp of the plateau. The French front now lay where it had been on 24th February, the fourth day of the great battle.

The German counter-attacks came fast, and their main object was the little salient at Les Chambrettes. All the afternoon of the 16th they kept up a continuous bombardment on de Salins's right, which for two days went through the extreme of human misery. To win ground is easy compared with the task of holding it—holding it through the long winter nights in mud and snow and bitter cold, with no dug-outs, no hot food, no shelter, no rest from an overpowering fatigue. For six days a Zouave battalion, under Lieutenant-Colonel Richard,

*Dec. 17.* held the Les Chambrettes sector. On the 17th the Germans counter-attacked, and managed to recover the ruins of the farm, the last point from which observation was possible towards Douaumont and the Chauffour Wood. The

*Dec. 18.* Zouaves refused to be relieved till they had won it back. On the afternoon of Monday, the 18th, at three o'clock in the afternoon,

win it back they did, and such an attack was never witnessed before by mortal eyes. Every man was a muddy ghost, weary to death, and chilled to the bone. Long ago, in Marlborough's wars, the cry of "*En avant les gants glacés !*" had attended the charge of the Maison du Roi. Now it was "*En avant les pieds gelés !*" that the leader shouted. The frozen feet did not fail him. Men crawled on their knees, men used rifles as crutches ; but, limping and stumbling, they swarmed over Les Chambrettes and made it theirs. That last exploit of the battle was the greatest of all, and for a parallel we must turn to the Berserk chronicle of some fierce Northern saga.

The action fought between 15th and 18th December was, considering its short duration, the most remarkable Allied success since the campaign opened in the West. The prisoners taken numbered 11,387, including 284 officers ; 115 guns were captured or destroyed ; 44 trench mortars, 107 machine guns, and much other material were taken ; four villages, five forts, many redoubts, and innumerable trenches were occupied ; and the better part of six enemy divisions was destroyed. The French losses for the first day were in the neighbourhood of 1,500 ! In the later days the total mounted higher, thereby proving Nivelle's point : for he had argued that it was only when the line grew stationary that losses came, and that an attack, kept up continuously, must be economical—a truth of infinite significance for the future. Moreover, it was no sudden gift from fortune, but a result foreseen and planned for—a triumph of generalship and calculation as well as

of fighting prowess. The episode takes its place in the history of the war like some noble lyric interpolated in a great drama. Combined with the Battle of the Ancre, it was a proof to the world that the Allied infantry could, whenever they cared, take deadly toll of the enemy at little cost to themselves. It was a proof, too, of waning German *moral*. The enormous droves of prisoners were not "rounded up" by surprise manœuvres, but taken in fair frontal attack, and they surrendered because they were thoroughly beaten. They could not stand, even when in superior numbers, against the drive and resolution of the French line.

The event came at an auspicious moment. It was for General Nivelle a spectacular farewell to his old army, and an eloquent message to his countrymen on his assumption of the highest command. Above all, it was France's reply to Germany's manœuvring for a false peace. "To her hypocritical overtures," General Mangin told his men, "you have answered with the cannon mouth and the bayonet point. You have been the true ambassadors of the Republic. You have done well by your country."

## CHAPTER CXXIII.

### THE POSITION AT SEA.

Events at Sea during July and August—Abortive Sally of German High Sea Fleet—The October Raid from Zeebrugge—Incidents during November—German Attacks on Liners and Hospital Ships—Increased Activity of Enemy Submarines—Reasons for it—Voyages of U Boats to America—Sinking of Merchantmen off Nantucket—Question of International Law—German Brutality at Sea—Success of German Submarine Campaign—The Possible Plans of Defence—Importance of a Defeat of the Enemy's High Sea Fleet—Mr. Churchill's Views—Changes at the Admiralty—Sir John Jellicoe becomes First Sea Lord—His Speech of January 11, 1917.

THE second half of the year 1916 saw no great sea battle to break the monotony of the vigil of the British Navy. The events which led to the Battle of Jutland were not repeated. Movements there were both in the North Sea and the Baltic, but none was followed by an engagement of capital ships. The autumn was indeed a period of high significance in naval warfare, but the struggle was waged below the surface. The face of the northern waters saw no encounter which deserved the name of a serious battle.

On the night of 13th July a convoy of German merchantmen, escorted by several torpedo boats and armed trawlers, and an auxiliary cruiser—the converted *Hermann* of Hamburg, July 13.

carrying 6-inch guns—was proceeding northward off the Swedish coast. In Norrköping Bay, south of Stockholm, they were attacked by four Russian destroyers, and at once turned and made for Swedish territorial waters. They did not escape scathless, for the *Hermann* was sunk, as well as two of the torpedo boats and several ships of the convoy, and most of the armed trawlers were disabled. Nine days later, on the night of 22nd July, three German destroyers were sighted by British light cruisers near the North Hinder Lightship. The enemy at once fled, but was picked up again off the Schouwen Bank, fifteen miles north of the Scheldt, and after a running fight, in which he was repeatedly hit, chased into Belgian waters.

In the third week of August the North Sea witnessed a certain activity. On Saturday, the 19th, the German High Sea Fleet came out, preceded

Aug. 19. by a large number of scouting craft and accompanied by Zeppelins. They found the British forces in strength, and deemed it wiser to alter course and return to port. In searching for the enemy we lost two light cruisers by submarine attack—*Nottingham*\* (Captain C. B. Miller) and *Falmouth*† (Captain John D. Edwards)—but happily the loss of life was small. One German submarine was destroyed, and another rammed and damaged. That same day the British submarine E 23, Lieutenant-Commander Robert Turner, attacked a German battleship of the *Nassau* class, and

\* *Nottingham* had a tonnage of 5,400 and 25 knots. She had been in the Battles of the Dogger Bank and Jutland.

† *Falmouth*, which was also at the Battle of Jutland, had 5,250 tons and 25 knots.

hit her with two torpedoes. She was last seen being escorted back to harbour by destroyers in a precarious condition.

There was no further incident to chronicle till the close of October, when destroyers of the German flotilla, which had its base at Zeebrugge, placed a bold exploit to their credit. The safety of the mighty Channel ferry, which had carried millions of our troops safely backward and forward between France and England, had become almost an article of faith with the British people. In spite of drifting mines and submarine activity our lines of communication had remained untouched, and Sir Reginald Bacon, the admiral commanding the Dover patrols, was able to report in his dispatch of 27th July 1916 that not a single life had been lost in the vast transport operations of two years. The night of Thursday, 26th October, was moonless and stormy, and, under cover of the weather, ten German destroyers slipped out of Zeebrugge and made their way down Channel. Air reconnaissance had of course given them the exact location of our minefields and our main cross-Channel route. Creeping along inshore in the dark, they managed to elude the vigilance of the British patrols. They fell in with an empty transport, the *Queen*, which they promptly torpedoed. The vessel kept afloat for six hours, and all her crew were saved. Six of our drifters were also sunk, and then British destroyers came on the scene. One of them, *Flirt* \* (Lieutenant R. P. Kellett), was surprised at close quarters by the enemy and sunk, while another,

\* *Flirt* belonged to "C" class, and had 380 tons and 30 knots.

*Nubian*\* (Commander Bernard), was torpedoed while attacking the invaders, and went aground, her tow having parted in the heavy weather. The enemy made off without apparently suffering any losses from our gun or torpedo fire; but there was some evidence that two of his destroyers afterwards struck mines and perished.

Such were the bare facts of a somewhat obscure incident, which for the moment agitated public opinion and increased the uneasiness as to our naval position which the growth of submarine activity had already engendered. In itself it was a small affair—a bold enterprise which had every chance in its favour, for the confusion and darkness made its success almost certain. The wonder was not that it happened, but that it had not happened before. Major Moraht and others had long been pointing out the vital importance of the Channel ferry for Britain, and it would have been little short of miraculous if nothing had ever occurred to threaten that line of communication. The German adventure was to be expected so long as the nest of pirates at Zeebrugge was not smoked out or hermetically sealed up, and such true preventive measures were, as we shall see later, both difficult and dangerous until the main German Fleet had been definitely put out of action. In the words of one of the acutest of naval critics: “A naval war, in which one side is so predominant that the other avoids action, is bound—in the absence of a decisive battle—to resolve itself, so far as naval incidents go, into a succession

\* *Nubian* was of the “F” group, and had 985 tons and 33 knots. Both had been engaged in the operations off the Belgian coast under Rear-Admiral Hood in the autumn of 1914.

of successes by the weaker power and a story of failure by the stronger. And as the world generally is tempted to judge of the progress of the war, not by the permanent and abiding conditions set up, but by occurrences, it may well happen from time to time that public confidence will rise and fall."

Three more incidents of what we may call open fighting fall to be recorded before the close of the year. On the night of 1st November *Nov. 1.* the *Oldambt*, a Dutch steamer, was captured by German destroyers near the North Hinder Lightship, a prize crew was put on board, and the vessel was making for Zeebrugge. Early next morning she was overtaken by British destroyers, and the prize crew made prisoners. Five German destroyers which came up as escort were engaged and put to flight. On 7th November a *Nov. 7.* British submarine, under Commander Noel Lawrence, fell in with a German squadron off the coast of Jutland, and hit two battleships of the *Kaiser* class. Three days later German torpedo craft of the latest and largest type, under *Nov. 10.* cover of fog, attempted a raid on the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, and fired on a Baltic port, a few miles west of Reval. They were engaged by Russian destroyers, and driven off in confusion, losing from six to nine vessels.

The main German successes during these months were won against liners and hospital ships. With regard to the latter Germany followed her familiar method. She attacked vessels which bore conspicuously the mark of their non-belligerent mission, attacked them often in broad daylight, and then, to justify herself, invented the legend that they were



laden with ammunition and war material. On 21st

Nov. 21. November there was a flagrant instance in the torpedoing of the *Britannic* in the Zea Channel off the south-east point of Attica. The *Britannic*, which in gross tonnage was the largest British ship afloat, was carrying over 1,000 wounded soldiers from Salonika, most of whom were saved, the total death-roll being only about fifty. The outrage took place in the clear morning light, when the character of the great vessel was apparent to the most purblind German submarine commander. On 6th November the P.

Nov. 6. and O. liner *Arabia*, a sister ship to the *India* and the *Persia*, which had been destroyed previously, was torpedoed without warning in the Mediterranean, all the passengers and the majority of the crew being saved.

Since the war began the most striking fact in naval warfare had been the development of the range of action of the submarine. At first it was believed in Britain that an enemy submarine could do little more than reach the British coast, and the torpedoing of the *Pathfinder* on September 5th and of the three *Cressys* off the Hook of Holland on September 22, 1914, came as an unpleasant surprise to popular opinion. In December of that year von Tirpitz himself announced that the larger under-water boats could remain out for as much as fourteen days at a time. Two months later the U boats were in the Irish Channel, and in May 1915 they were in the Mediterranean. There, to be sure, they were assisted by depots *en route*, and the full extent of a submarine's range was not under-

stood till, in July 1916, the *Deutschland* reached the American coast. This exploit so heartened German opinion that she announced a long-range blockade of Britain, and promised in October to begin operations. The Allied Governments protested to neutral states against the extension to submarines of the ordinary rule of international law which permits a warship to enjoy for twenty-four hours the hospitality of foreign territorial waters. They urged that any belligerent submarine entering a neutral port should be detained there, on the ground that such vessels, being submersible, could not be properly identified at sea, and must escape the normal control and observation of other types of warships.

On Saturday, 7th October, the German U 53 (Captain Rose) arrived at Newport, Rhode Island. She did not take in supplies, but she received certain information, and presently Oct. 7. departed. During the next two days she sunk by torpedo or gun-fire eight vessels in the vicinity of the Nantucket Lightship, including one Dutch and one Norwegian steamer. There was no life lost, owing to the prompt appearance of American destroyers. The performance created something like a panic in American shipping circles, and for a day or two outgoing ships were held up. But it was soon obvious that talk of a blockade of the American coast would awaken a very ugly temper in the United States, and could not be defended by the wildest stretch of the rules of international law. Submarines which took at least a month coming and going from German waters could not institute any effective blockade without illegal assistance on the American side, and the Government of Wash-

ington was determined that the temptation should not arise. Accordingly the performance of U 53 remained unique. The *Deutschland* arrived on its

second voyage on 1st November, and the occasional transit of other submarines continued ; but the Nantucket doings were not repeated, and the talk of blockade was suddenly dropped.

But in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and in all the waters adjacent to the British and German coasts, the autumn saw a determined revival of Germany's submarine campaign. The comparative immunity which had endured throughout the summer was violently broken, and the tale of Allied and neutral losses quickly mounted to a dangerous figure. Germany was operating now with the large boats laid down in the spring of 1915—boats with a radius of 12,000 miles, carrying deck guns with a range of 6,000 yards, with strong upper works capable of resisting hits by six-pounders, and with a surface speed of twenty-five knots, and a submerged speed of twelve. Her promise to President Wilson of May 1916 was utterly forgotten. Vessels were torpedoed without warning, and without provision being made for the safety of the passengers. The *Marina*, for example, which was destroyed off the Irish coast at the end of October with considerable loss of life, had many Americans on board ; but Berlin gambled on the preoccupation of the American people with the Presidential election. Swedish, Danish, and Dutch vessels suffered heavily, and the Norwegian merchant navy was a special target owing to Norway's refusal to permit German submarines inside her territorial waters.

Daily the total of Allied losses went up by leaps and bounds. The U boats became insolent in their daring, and in the beginning of December one of them shelled the town of Funchal, Madeira, in broad daylight, and sunk several ships in her harbour. The barbarity of the enemy grew with his successes. The *Westminster* was torpedoed without warning on 14th December, and sunk in *Dec. 14.* five minutes. As the crew tried to escape, the submarine shelled them at a 3,000 yards range, sinking one of the boats, and killing the master and chief engineer. By the end of the year Germany claimed that the Allied tonnage was disappearing from the sea at the rate of 10,000 tons a day; and though the figure was considerably overstated, yet beyond doubt a maritime situation had arisen, the gravest which had yet faced the Allies since the beginning of the war.

The reason of Germany's success was not far to seek. So long as the U boats confined themselves to the narrow seas we could by nets and other devices take heavy toll of them, and nullify their efforts. But all our defensive measures were idle when they extended their range and operated in the open waters of the Atlantic. A new problem had arisen to be met by new methods. Germany was attempting to meet the British blockade by a counter-blockade—to cripple the sea-borne trade which brought food to the people of Britain and munitions of war to all the Allies. Our available merchant tonnage was shrinking daily, and, with labour already taxed to its utmost, it looked as if it might be difficult to replace the wastage. An extravagant rise in prices, a genuine scarcity of food, even the crippling

of some vital section of the Allied munitionment, were possibilities that now loomed not too remotely on the horizon.

To cope with the German campaign there were three possible plans—two practicable, but at the best inadequate; one summary and final, but hard to achieve. The first was to arm all merchantmen. This would not prevent torpedoing, but it would prevent destruction by bombs or deck-guns; and since no submarine could carry a large stock of torpedoes, the power of mischief of the under-water boat would be thereby limited. Such arming of merchantmen had the drawback that it would absorb a large number of guns for which there was other and urgent use, or in the alternative would compel munition factories to switch off from their normal work to insure their production. It would also induce the Germans to revive wholesale their practice of sinking without warning, and so raise a question which America was anxious to let sleep. The second plan was to revive an old fashion, and make all merchantmen sail in convoy. This method was unpopular among shipowners because of its very great inconvenience and delay, and it had the further objection that it would give the enemy submarines an easy target, assuming that they eluded the vigilance of the escorting warships. With regard to the escort, the type of fast lighter craft required could only be provided by a large amount of new construction, or by withdrawing that type from its very necessary duties with the main battle squadrons. Both of the plans were palliatives rather than cures, and both made further demands upon the already severely taxed reserve of British labour.

The one final policy against submarines was to carry our minefields up to the edge of the German harbours, and to pen the enemy within his own bases. But clearly this aggressive campaign was impossible so long as the main German Fleet remained in being. It would be impossible, while the German High Sea Fleet was still intact, to utilize a large part of our fleet in mining operations in his home waters without running the risk of a division of strength and a sudden disaster. The true remedy for the submarine menace was a naval victory which would destroy the better part of the capital ships. This did not mean that Sir John Jellicoe was forthwith to run his head against the defences of Wilhelmshaven, and risk everything in an attempt to bring the enemy to action; but it did mean that the last word, as always, lay with the main fleets, and that to rest on our laurels because the German High Sea Fleet was more or less immobilized was to repose upon a false security. The truth was that our command of the sea was far from absolute. We had not neutralized the enemy's fleet so long as it remained above water, and the development of submarine warfare had impaired the safety of our ocean-borne trade. We possessed a conditional superiority, but we could not make it actual and reap the fruits of it till we had won a decisive sea battle.

This fact, sufficiently obvious to any sailor, was obscured during the autumn of 1916 by some unfortunate publications of Mr. Winston Churchill, who, having returned from the Front, and being without official responsibility, was free to indulge in comments on the situation. "The primary and

dominant fact," he wrote, "is that from its base in Scottish waters the British Fleet delivers a continuous attack upon the vital necessities of the enemy, whereas the enemy, from his home bases, produces no corresponding effect upon us." He urged the country to rest satisfied with this "silent attack," and criticized the Battle of Jutland as an "audacious but unnecessary effort" to bring the enemy to action. No necessity of war, he argued, obliged us to accept the risk of fighting at a distance from our bases and in enemy waters. Apart from the fact that Mr. Churchill's view was in conflict with principles that had always governed our sea policy, his conclusion was wholly unwarranted by the facts. The German Fleet by the mere fact that it existed intact, did "exercise a continuous attack upon our vital necessities." It crippled our efforts to overcome the very real submarine menace. A successful general action, so far from being a luxury and a trimming, was the chief demand of the moment, for only by the shattering of von Scheer could the U boats be corralled, blinded, and effectively checkmated.

The anxiety of the nation was presently reflected in certain important changes made in the high naval commands. For some time it had been urged that the post of First Sea Lord was the most vital in the Navy, and that the man who held it should be one who had large experience of actual service under modern conditions. For twenty-eight months Sir John Jellicoe had been continuously at sea. He had been a successful Admiralty administrator, and understood official procedure; but, above all, he had learned at first hand the problems of the hour. It

is desirable during any campaign that the man with first-hand knowledge of realities should be given the directing power at home. The policy had been followed when Sir William Robertson was brought back from France as Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and the same course was now taken with the Commander-in-Chief at sea. On 4th December Sir John Jellicoe was gazetted First Sea Lord in place of Sir Henry Jackson, who *Dec. 4.* was appointed President of the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, while Sir David Beatty assumed command of the Grand Fleet. Sir Cecil Burney, formerly Sir John Jellicoe's, second in command, became Second Sea Lord; and Captain Lionel Halsey, formerly Sir John's Captain of the Fleet, became Fourth Sea Lord. With the exception of the Third Sea Lord, Rear-Admiral Tudor, the naval members of the Board of Admiralty were thus completely changed.

The new appointments were warmly welcomed by the nation, and did something to restore popular confidence. The crying needs of the moment were that our naval policy should be considered not as a thing by itself, but as part of the whole strategic plan of the Allies, and that the administration at headquarters should be in the closest touch with the requirements of the fighting line. Sir John Jellicoe was not only a great sea-captain, but a trained administrator and a man of statesmanlike width and foresight, and he brought to his new office an unequalled experience of active service. Moreover, the mere change of duties was in itself desirable, for an unrelieved vigil of twenty-eight months must tell upon the strongest constitution



and the stoutest nerve. In all human enterprises some readjustment of *personnel* is periodically necessary, if only to ensure that variation of tasks which is the best rest and refreshment to men of action. The new Commander-in-Chief was the man to whom fate had granted the widest experience of actual fighting. In two and a half years Sir John Jellicoe had been no more than two and a half hours within range of the enemy. Sir David Beatty had had better fortune, for he had been at the Battle of the Bight of Heligoland, at the battle of January 24, 1915, and had been in action through the whole of the Battle of Jutland. At the age of forty-six he succeeded to the highest fighting command in the British Navy, and those who believed that there was no final settlement of our sea difficulties except in a decisive victory over the main enemy fleet rejoiced that in Sir David Beatty the true spirit of the offensive was incarnate.

It is not the fashion of British seamen to be addicted to oratory, and the rare occasions when a great sailor speaks of his work are on that account the more memorable. Such an occasion was Sir John Jellicoe's speech in the City of London on Jan. 11, January 11, 1917, the first he had made since his new appointment. He spoke 1917. of the indomitable spirit of the men under his command, and of the superb service rendered by the merchant navy. He described for his hearers the far-flung toil of our sailors, and, touching on the submarine menace, declared his confidence that it could be dealt with, if the ship-building yards and the engineering works did not slacken their efforts. But the most significant pas-

sage was that in which he expounded the new difficulties and problems of the fleets. His words deserve quotation, for it is only by the realization of the magnitude of the task that justice can be done to the British achievement.

"There are great differences between the conditions of to-day and 100 years ago. These lie in the greater speed of ships, in the longer range of guns, in the menace of the torpedo as fired from ships, destroyers, and submarines, in the menace of the mines, the use of aircraft as scouts, and of wireless telegraphy. In the Napoleonic era the ships opened fire with guns at ranges of about 800 yards; the ships of to-day open fire at 22,000 yards (or 11 nautical miles) range, and gun-fire begins to be very effective at 18,000 yards. The torpedo as fired from surface vessels is effective certainly up to 10,000 yards range, and this requires that a ship shall keep beyond this distance to fight her guns. As the conditions of visibility—in the North Sea particularly—are frequently such as to make fighting difficult beyond a range of 10,000 yards, and as modern fleets are invariably accompanied by very large numbers of destroyers, whose main duty is to attack with the torpedo the heavy ships of the enemy, it will be recognized how great becomes the responsibility of the admiral in command of the fleet, particularly under the conditions of low visibility to which I have referred. As soon as destroyers tumble upon a fleet within torpedo range the situation becomes critical for the heavy ships.

"The submarine is another factor which has changed the situation, as this class of vessel, combined with the use of mines, entirely prevents the close blockade resorted to in former days. In addition, these two weapons add greatly to the anxieties of those in command. It is one thing to fight an enemy that you can see; it is a different matter to deal with a hidden foe. Thus modern conditions add immensely in this respect to the responsibility of those commanding fleets. They cannot get warning of the enemy being at sea until the enemy is well at sea.

"Nelson watching Villeneuve off Cadiz had his inshore squadron close into the enemy's port, and could see what was actually going on inside that port. The British Fleet of to-

day, watching the German High Sea Fleet, is not in the same happy position. The further the watching ships are from the enemy's port the greater is the facility with which the enemy can escape and the greater is the difficulty of intercepting him. There was never any likelihood in the olden days of the enemy's fleet escaping unseen, unless the blockading squadron was forced from its watching position by bad weather, which, of course, occasionally occurred. In our day submarines and mines compel the watching force to take up their station further and further away.

"In spite of this, and in spite of the German boast as to the occasions on which the German Fleet has searched the North Sea for the British Fleet, our enemies have only on one occasion ventured sufficiently far with their Main Fleet to give us an opportunity to engage them. No vessels, neutral or British, have sighted the High Sea Fleet far from its ports on any other occasion. It is true that on August 19 last year the enemy's fleet came within measurable distance of the English coast, being sighted by some of our patrols, but turned back, presumably because the presence of our Fleet was reported by their aircraft. Raids on the British coast with fast cruisers or battle-cruisers have been carried out, but on each occasion the passage from German waters has been made apparently under cover of the night, the enemy appearing off our coast at dawn and retiring before comparatively small forces. Such feats were of course impossible in the days of slow speed, and are now undertaken probably only in the hope of enticing us into the adoption of a false strategy by breaking up our forces to guard all vulnerable points. I do not criticize the Germans for their strategy or for not running any risks with their fleet. On the other hand, their boasts of searching the North Sea for the enemy must be pronounced as without justifiable basis."

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## CHAPTER CXXIV.

### THE CAMPAIGN IN THE AIR TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

The "Mastery of the Air"—Developments during the Somme Battle—"Contact Patrols"—Individual Achievements—Boelcke and Immelmann—Nungesser and Guynemer—Albert Ball—New German Types—The Spad and the Halberstadt—Bombardments during 1916—Summary of Results—Controversy on Aerial Question in England—The Reports of the Committees—The Air Board—The Zeppelin Position—Raids during the Summer—First Zeppelin brought down on 2nd September—The Raid of 23rd September—The Raid of 1st October—The Raid of 27th November—The Failure of the Zeppelin—The Possibility of Raids by Airplane.

THE summer and autumn of 1916 saw no such spectacular revival in German aeronautics as marked the close of 1915. The Fokker had found its level, and though Germany struggled hard to find new types, she did not again steal a march upon the Allied construction. Moreover, the opening of the Somme offensive saw an immense advance in the tactical use of airplanes by the Allies, an advance marked by such boldness and ingenuity that the question of aerial supremacy seemed to be clearly decided. The French and British airmen had beyond doubt won the initiative. This was recognized by the enemy, and captured letters were full of complaints of the inadequacy of the German reply. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the

Battle of the Somme in its later stages showed, indeed, something of the old see-saw. There came moments when the German airmen recovered their nerve and made a stout defence. But it was always a defence, and the war was never seriously carried into the Allied camp.

The popular phrase, the "mastery of the air," was in those days apt to be misused.\* There were weeks when the Allies' total of loss seemed to be higher than that of their adversaries, and pessimists complained that our mastery had been lost. Mastery in the absolute sense never existed. The Allied squadrons still ventured much when they crossed the enemy lines, and they paid a price, sometimes a heavy price, for their successes. But they maintained continuously the offensive. Daily they did their work of destruction and reconnaissance far inside the enemy territory, while the few German machines that crossed our lines came at night, and

\* The common sense of the case was well put by Major Baird in the debate in the House of Commons on April 26, 1917: "The mastery of the air is a phrase having very little meaning. There is really no such thing, for not only is the air a very big space, but for the purpose of aircraft it is becoming bigger every day. No one will pretend that it is practicable to patrol a strip of air a hundred miles long and five miles deep in such a way as to make it impossible for the enemy to get below or above the patrol. It is not wise to impress upon people the idea of an aerial mastery which will invariably prevent any enemy getting through. It is not fair to lead people to believe that they can be given a degree of protection which is impossible, and it would be unwise to withdraw machines from useful and effective work merely to reassure people at home. *What can be done is to ensure that our airmen shall enjoy a degree of predominance sufficient to enable them to carry out their duties and to prevent the Germans carrying out their duties.*"

at a great elevation. Hourly throughout the battles they gave to the work of the infantry a tactical support to which the enemy could show no parallel. If the Allied losses had been consistently higher than the Germans the superiority would still have been ours, for we achieved our purpose. We hampered the enemy's reserves, destroyed his depots, reconnoitred every acre of his hinterland, and shattered his peace of mind. For such results no price could have been too high, for our air work was the foundation of every infantry advance. As a matter of sober fact, the price was not high; it was far less than Germany paid for her inadequate defence.

During the later Verdun battles and the great offensive on the Somme, the four main aerial activities were maintained which were set forth in an earlier chapter. Our airplanes did long-distance reconnoitring work, they "spotted" for the guns, they bombed important enemy centres, and they fought and destroyed enemy machines. The daily *communiqués* recorded the destruction of enemy dumps and depots and railway junctions, and a long series of brilliant conflicts in the air, where often a German squadron was broken up and put to flight by a single Allied plane. To a watcher of these battles the signs of our superiority were manifest. Often at night a great glare behind the lines marked where some German ammunition store had gone up in flames. The orderly file of Allied kite balloons glittered daily in the sun; but the German "sausages" were few, and often a wisp of fire in the heavens showed that another had fallen victim to an Allied airman. A German plane was as rare a sight a mile within our lines as a swallow in November, but

the eternal crack of anti-aircraft guns from the German side told of the persistency of the Allied inroads.

The most interesting development brought about by the Somme action was that of "contact patrols." The machines used were of the slowest type, and it was their business to accompany an infantry advance and report progress. In the intricate trench fighting of the modern battle nothing is harder than to locate the position at any one moment of the advancing battalions. Flares may not be observed in the smoke and dust of battle; dispatch runners may fail to get through the barrage; the supply of pigeons may give out or the birds be killed *en route*—and the general behind may be unable in consequence to give orders to the guns. With the system of "creeping barrages" it is vital that the command should be fully informed from time to time of the exact situation of the infantry attack. The airman, flying low over the trenches, can detect the whereabouts of his own troops and report accordingly. Again and again during the Somme, when the mist of battle and ill weather had swallowed up the advance, airplanes brought half-hourly accurate and most vital intelligence. A check could in this way be made known, and the guns turned on to break up an obstacle; while an advance swifter than the time-table could be saved from the risk of its own barrage. Curiously enough, except for rifle and machine-gun fire from the German trenches, these flights were not so desperately risky. They were made usually at a height of something under 500 feet, and the German anti-aircraft guns, made to fire straight into the air, and usually mounted on the crests of the ridges, could not be trained on

the marauders. These airplanes did not content themselves with reconnaissance. They attacked the enemy in the trenches with bombs and machine-gun fire, and on many occasions completely demoralized him. There was one instance of a whole battalion surrendering to an airplane. Bouchavesnes was taken largely by French fire from the air, and the last trench at Gueudecourt fell to a British airman.

The air, as we have seen, was the realm for individual prowess, and slowly from the multitude of combatants figures began to emerge of an epic greatness; men who steadily added to their tale of destruction, till in the world's eyes their work took the appearance of a grim rivalry. The Germans and the French made no secret of their heroes, but rather encouraged the advertisement of their names; but the Royal Flying Corps, true to its traditions, contented itself with a bare recital of the deed, till an occasional V.C. lifted the veil of anonymity. Germany possessed the great twin brothers Boelcke and Immelmann, who rose to fame during the Verdun struggle. Immelmann was the chief exponent of the Fokker, and had eighteen victims to his credit when, on 18th June, he was shot down *June 18.* by Second Lieutenant McCubbin, who was still in his novitiate in the Royal Flying Corps. On 28th October Boelcke, who the day before *Oct. 28.* had destroyed his fortieth Allied plane, perished in a collision. It is pleasant to record that these heroes of the air had the respect of their foes as well as the admiration of their friends, and the Allied airmen sent memorial wreaths to their funerals. The chief French champions were



Guynemer and Nungesser, who survived the winter, in spite of adventures where every risk on earth was taken. In September, for example, Guynemer's machine was struck by a shell at an altitude of 10,000 feet. He made vain efforts to hold it up, but it dropped 5,000 feet, and was then caught by an air current and driven over the French lines. It crashed to earth and became an utter wreck; but the airman, though stunned, was unhurt. All records, however, were excelled by the British airman, Captain Albert Ball, formerly of the Sherwood Foresters. When not yet twenty he had taken part in over a hundred aerial combats, and had accounted for over thirty German machines. His life was fated to be as short as it was heroic, for he perished in the spring offensive of 1917, after having destroyed for certain forty-one enemy aeroplanes, with ten more practically certain, and many others where the likelihood was strong. No greater marvel of skill and intrepidity has been exhibited by any service in any army in any campaign in the history of the world.\*

During the greater part of the Somme battle the Allied machines were at least equal to the German in pace and handiness. The little Nieuport scouts, in especial, dealt death to the kite balloons, and the Martinsyde and De Havilland fighting planes were more than a match for the Fokker. In October, however, the enemy produced two new types—the Spad and the Halberstadt—both based on French models and possessing engines of 240 h.p. With them his airmen could work at a height of

\* Captain Ball received the Victoria Cross posthumously. He had already won the D.S.O. and the Military Cross.

20,000 feet and swoop down upon British machines moving at a lower altitude. Hence there came a time, at the close of the Somme operations, when the see-saw once again slightly inclined in the Germans' favour. The moment passed, and long before the great Spring offensive began the arrival of new and improved British types had redressed the balance.

The aerial warfare of 1916, as summarized by the French Staff, showed that 900 enemy airplanes had been destroyed by the Allies, the French accounting for 450, and the British for 250. Eighty-one kite balloons had been burned, fifty-four by the French, and twenty-seven by the British. Seven hundred and fifty bombardments had taken place, of which the French were responsible for 250 and the British for 180. Apart from tactical bombardments immediately behind the fighting line, the record of the year was least conspicuous in the matter of bomb dropping. Experience had shown that the German public were peculiarly sensible to this mode of attack ; but the preoccupation of the Allies with great battles limited the number of machines which could be spared for that purpose. Nevertheless some of the raids undertaken were singularly bold and effective, as a few examples will show. On 12th October a Franco-British squadron of forty machines attacked the Mauser rifle factory at Oberndorf on the Neckar, dropped nearly a thousand pounds weight of projectiles, and fought their way home through a hornet's nest of enemy craft. On 9th October Stuttgart was attacked ; on the 22nd the ironworks at Hagondage, north of Metz, and the railway station of Thionville. On

Oct. 12.

Oct. 9-22.

22nd September two French airmen, Captain de Beauchamp and Lieutenant Daucourt, in *Sept. 22.* a Sopwith biplane, visited and bombed the Krupp works at Essen—a *tour de force* rather than a work of military importance, for Essen could not suffer much from the limited number of bombs which could be carried on a 500-mile journey.

*Nov. 17.* On 17th November Captain de Beauchamp in the same machine flew over Friedrichshafen to Munich, which he bombed, and then crossed the Alps and descended in Italy. But the most sensational achievement was that of Second Lieutenant Marschal on a special type of Nieuport monoplane, who on the night of 20th

*June 20.* June flew over Berlin, dropping leaflets, prefaced with these words: "We might have bombarded the open town of Berlin, and killed women and innocent children, but we content ourselves with this." He was making for Russia; but unfortunately he had trouble with his machine, and came down at Cholm, in Poland, where he was taken prisoner. He was then only sixty-three miles from the Russian trenches, and had travelled 811 miles.

The controversy raised by unofficial writers as to the administration of the British air service, which had sprung up originally when the first Zeppelin raids gave the civilian people of Britain food for thought, raged intermittently through 1916. It was a topic where the critic was at an advantage, for the ordinary man had no expert knowledge to test his criticism, and it was frequently impossible for the authorities to make reply, since that would have involved the publica-

tion of details valuable to the enemy. Any considerable increase in flying casualties brought the question to the fore, and the natural anxiety of the British citizen to make certain of the efficiency of a service on which he depended for his safety was buttressed by the grievances of private aircraft makers against the Royal Aircraft Factory at Farnborough. The private maker was indeed in a difficult case. His market must be with the Government; to Government aid he looked for the recompense for the toil and money he had spent in new production; and jealousy was inevitable of a State business which seemed to take the bread out of the mouth of a deserving private industry.

In August a committee was appointed to consider the state of affairs at Farnborough, when various faults were discovered, and a scheme of reorganization proposed. Another committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Bailhache, sat throughout the summer, investigating the charges brought by press and parliamentary critics against the administration and command of the Royal Flying Corps. The inquiry was a personal triumph for the Director-General of Military Aeronautics, Sir David Henderson, who had no difficulty in disposing of the foolish charges, based on hearsay evidence or no evidence at all, which had been showered on his organization. At the same time, many unsatisfactory points were revealed, and the committee recommended that the Royal Aircraft Factory should be regarded rather as an experimental centre than as a manufacturing establishment, and urged that the efficiency of the service required that the fighting command should be

separated from the responsibility for supplying equipment. The latter should belong to a special department which should meet the demands both of the Army and the Navy.

This last recommendation exposed one of the main difficulties of the question. The Navy and the Army were in perpetual competition, and the Air Board formed under the presidency of Lord Curzon in May 1916 could not control the quarrel. When Lord Curzon in December went to the War Cabinet he was succeeded at the Air Board by Lord Sydenham, who presently resigned. Mr. Lloyd George some weeks later attempted to solve the problem by constituting the Air Board into an Air Ministry, with Lord Cowdray in charge, and appointing Commander Paine to be the air member of the Board of Admiralty, as Sir David Henderson was air member of the Army Council. The production of machines for both the naval and military services was handed over to the Ministry of Munitions. The change was an improvement, but few people believed that it was a final solution of the problem. The administration of a new and swiftly developing service is more intricate at home than in the field. The demands of two separate organizations had to be faced—the Navy and the Army—organizations that differed largely in their requirements. The private makers had to be kept in touch with the needs of the fighting services; they had to be controlled and advised, and at the same time their initiative in research and experiment must not be crippled. Finally, the executive command of the service must not be confused with the duty of supplying *matériel*, for the two tasks

were poles apart. The Air Service had from small beginnings grown rapidly to great dimensions, and the need for differentiation of functions had arisen. It is never an easy matter to settle, and it was not made easier by the pressure of instant war needs.

We have already traced the history of the air raids in England down to the end of March 1916, when for the first time a Zeppelin came down within sight of eyes watching from British soil. Our descendants will look back upon the era of Zeppelin raids as one of the most curious in the history of the country. The face of the land was changed. Lighting restrictions plunged great cities into gloom, and London became as ill-lit as in the days of Queen Anne, and vastly more dangerous for the pedestrian, owing to a speed of traffic undreamed of in the eighteenth century. Never had the metropolis looked more beautiful than on moonless nights, when small sparks of orange light gave mystery to the great thoroughfares and the white fingers of searchlights groped in the heavens. But never had it been a more uncomfortable habitation. The busy life of the capital had to adapt itself to the conditions of a remote and backward country town.

It cannot be said that the raids had any real effect upon the good spirits and confidence of our people. Indeed they were taken too lightly, and regarded by the ordinary citizen rather as curious variety shows than as incidents of ruthless war. The first Zeppelin visits found us unprepared, and our only security lay in the unhandiness of the weapon employed. As the months passed we perfected our scheme of defence, and realized more

clearly the limitation of the menace. Zeppelin attacks were largely blind. The great airships rarely knew where they were, and were compelled to drop their bombs on speculation. The German reports of damage done were sheer pieces of propaganda, and had seldom much relation to the facts. Our anti-aircraft defences were largely increased, but we saw from the start that the true anti-Zeppelin weapon was the airplane, as Mr. Churchill had long before prophesied. To use it our pilots must practise the difficult task of making ascents and descents in the darkness. Once they had attained proficiency in night-work there was every reason to hope that the Zeppelins could no longer reach our shores unscathed. The early autumn of 1916 made these hopes a certainty.

Early in May, in a spell of bad weather, five German airships visited the north-east coast of England and the east coast of Scotland. Little damage was done, and one of them, L20, was wrecked on its return voyage. At the end of July the weather grew warm and still, and the raids

*July 28.* became frequent. On the night of 28th July three airships visited the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire coast, but they lost their way in the summer fog, and dropped their bombs in the

*July 31.* sea and on empty fields. On the night of the 31st they came again, this time seven in number, and their area of attack stretched from the Thames estuary to the Humber. Their aim seemed to be to drop incendiary bombs among

*Aug. 3.* the growing crops, but little damage was done, and no lives lost. On 3rd August eight appeared on the east coast, after attacking

British trawlers out at sea. Again they lost their way, and after killing some live stock were driven home by our guns.

A week later a bolder attack was made. A flotilla, variously estimated at from seven to ten in number, appeared on the east coast of England and Scotland. A number of towns were attacked, half a dozen people were killed and some fifty injured, but no material damage was done. Then came a lull, during the August moonlight, and it was not till the night of 24th August that the raiders came again. There were *Aug. 24.* six of them, and five were driven away by our gunfire from the sea-coast town which they attacked. One succeeded in getting as far as London and dropped bombs in a working-class suburb, killing and wounding a number of poor people, mostly women and children. It was the last raid under the old *régime*. Henceforth the Zeppelin was to meet a weapon more powerful than itself.

Saturday, 2nd September, was a heavy day, with an overcast sky, which cleared up at twilight. The situation on the Somme was getting *Sept. 2.* desperate, and Germany resolved to send against Britain the largest airship flotilla she had yet dispatched. There were ten Zeppelins, several of the newest and largest type, and three Schütte-Lanz military airships,\* and their objective was London and the great manufacturing cities of the Midlands. The Zeppelins completely lost their way.

\* The largest type of Zeppelin was close on 700 feet long, and its framework was made of aluminium. The Schütte-Lanz was some 500 feet long, with a framework of wood bound with wire.



They wandered over East Anglia, dropping irrelevant bombs, and received a warm reception from the British guns. At least two seem to have been hit. One lost her observation car, which was picked up in East Anglia, and this may have been the airship which was seen next morning by Dutch fishermen, travelling slowly and in difficulties, jettisoning stuff as she moved.

The military airships made for London. Ample warning of their coming had been given, and the city was in deep darkness, save for the groping searchlights. The streets were full of people, whose curiosity mastered their prudence, and they were rewarded by one of the most marvellous spectacles which the war had yet seen. Two of the marauders were driven off by our gun-fire, but one attempted to reach the city from the east. After midnight the sky was clear and star-strewn. The sound of the guns was heard and patches of bright light appeared in the heavens where our shells were bursting. Shortly after two o'clock on the morning of the 3rd, about 10,000 feet up in the air, an airship was seen moving south-westward. She dived and then climbed, as if to escape the shells, and for a moment seemed to be stationary. There came a burst of smoke which formed a screen around her and hid her from view, and then far above appeared little points of light. Suddenly the searchlights were shut off and the guns stopped. The next second the airship was visible like a glowing cigar, turning rapidly to a red and angry flame. She began to fall in a blazing wisp, lighting up the whole sky, so that countryfolk fifty miles off saw the portent. The spectators broke into wild cheering, for from some cause or other the raider had met its doom.

The cause was soon known. Several airmen had gone up to meet the enemy, and one of them, Lieutenant William Leeft Robinson, formerly of the Worcester Regiment, a young man of twenty-one, had come to grips with her. When he found her, he was 2,000 feet below her, but he climbed rapidly and soon won the top position. He closed, and though the machine gun on the top of the airship opened fire on him, he got in his blow in time. No such duel had ever been fought before, 10,000 feet up in the sky, in the view of hundreds of thousands of spectators over an area of a thousand square miles. The airship fell blazing in a field at Cuffley, near Enfield, a few miles north of London, and the bodies of the crew of sixteen were charred beyond recognition. They were given a military funeral according to the fine traditions of the Flying Corps. Lieutenant Robinson received the Victoria Cross, for he was the first man to grapple successfully with an enemy airship by night, and to point the way to the true line of British defence. It was no easy victory. Such a combat against the far stronger armament of the airship, and exposed to constant danger from our own bursting shells, involved risks little short of the most forlorn hope in the battlefield.

On the night of 23rd September the raiders came again. Twelve Zeppelins crossed the eastern shore line, making for London. Almost at once they were scattered by gun-fire, *Sept. 23.* and only two pursued their journey to the capital, where they succeeded in dropping bombs in a suburb of small houses. Of the others one attacked a Midland town. The total British casualties were

thirty killed and 110 injured. But they paid dearly for their enterprise. One, L33, was so seriously damaged by our anti-aircraft guns that she fled out to sea, and then, realizing that this meant certain death, returned to land, and came down in an Essex field. Her men, twenty-two in number, set her on fire, and then marched along the road to Colchester till they found a special constable, to whom they surrendered. The destruction was imperfectly done, and the remains gave the British authorities the complete details of the newest type of Zeppelin. A second, L32, was attacked by two airmen, Second Lieutenant F. Sowrey and Second Lieutenant Alfred Brandon of the Royal Flying Corps, who had been waiting for months for such a chance. The end was described by a special constable on duty. "In the searchlight beams she looked like an incandescent bar of white-hot steel. Then she staggered and swung to and fro in the air for just a perceptible moment of time. That, no doubt, was the instant when the damage was done, and the huge craft became unmanageable. Then, without drifting at all from her approximate place in the sky, without any other preliminary, she fell like a stone, first horizontally—that is, in her sailing trim—then in a position which rapidly became perpendicular, she went down, a mass of flames."

Germany had begun to fare badly in the air, but popular clamour and the vast sums sunk in Zeppelin manufacture prevented her from giving up the attempt. On the night of Monday, 25th September,

*Sept. 25.* seven Zeppelins crossed the east coast, aiming at the industrial districts of the Midlands and the north. The wide area of the

attack and the thick ground mist enabled them to return without loss, after bombing various working-class districts. The Germans claimed to have done damage to the great munition area, and even to have "bombarded the British naval port of Portsmouth." As a matter of fact, no place of any military importance and no munition factory suffered harm. The losses were among humble people living in the flimsy houses of industrial suburbs.

A more formidable attempt was made on 1st October. It was a clear, dark night when ten Zeppelins made landfall on their way to London. But they found that the capital was ringed by defences in the air and on the ground which made approach impossible. The attack became a complete fiasco. About midnight one Zeppelin, L31, approached the north-east environs, and was engaged by an airplane piloted by Second Lieutenant Tempest of the Royal Flying Corps. The watching thousands saw the now familiar sight—a glow and then a falling wisp of flame. The airship crashed to earth in a field near Potter's Bar, while the crowds at every viewpoint sang the National Anthem. The crew perished to a man, including the officer in charge, Lieutenant-Commander Mathy, the best-known of all the Zeppelin pilots. He it was who had commanded the raiding airships in September and October 1915, and had given to an American correspondent a flamboyant account of his experiences. He had always ridiculed the value of airplanes as an anti-Zeppelin weapon. "I am not afraid of them," he had said. "I think I could make it interesting for them, unless there was a regular swarm." By the

irony of fate he was to fall to a single machine, guided by a young officer of twenty-six.

During the wild weather of late October and early November there was a breathing space. The next attempt, warned by past experiences, steered clear of London, and aimed at the north-east coast, which, it was assumed, would be less strongly defended. It came on the night of 27th November,

*Nov. 27.* in cold, windless weather. How many airships were concerned is not certain, but the likelihood is that there were at least five. One, after dropping a few bombs in Durham and Yorkshire, was engaged by Lieutenant Pyott of the Royal Flying Corps off the Durham coast. Once again came the glow and then the wisp of flame. The airship split in two before reaching the sea. The débris sank, and when day broke only a scum on the water marked its resting-place. Another wandered across the Midlands on its work of destruction, and in the morning steered for home, closely pursued by our airplanes and bombarded by our guns. It left the land going very fast at a height of 8,000 feet, but nine miles out to sea it was attacked by four machines of the Royal Naval Air Service, as well as by the guns of an armed trawler. The issue was not long in doubt, and presently the Zeppelin fell blazing to the water. The credit of this exploit belonged to three young Naval airmen, Flight Lieutenant Pulling, Flight Lieutenant Cadbury, and Flight Sub-Lieutenant Fane.

The year 1916 was disastrous to the Zeppelin legend. The loss of twelve of these great machines, each costing from a quarter to half a million pounds

to build, was admitted by the enemy, and beyond doubt there were other losses unreported. The Zeppelin fleet was now sadly reduced in effectives, and it had lost still more in repute. A way had been found to meet the menace, and it was improbable that any future adaptation of the Zeppelin could break down the new defence. But the peril from the air was not over, as some too rashly concluded. Throughout the year there had been a number of attacks by German airplanes, which rarely extended beyond the towns in the south-eastern corner of England. Such attacks were not formidable, the raiders being as a rule in a desperate hurry to be gone. But it occurred to many, watching the advent of the new Spad and Halberstadt machines on the Western front, that in that quarter lay a threat to England more formidable than the airship. An airplane with a 240-h.p. engine, which could fly at a great speed at a height of close on 20,000 feet, could operate in broad daylight, and pass unchallenged to its goal. If we had not the type of machine to climb fast and operate at the same altitude, such a raider would be safe from attack alike by airplane and gun-fire. On the 28th of November a German machine, flying *Nov. 28.* very high, dropped nine bombs on London. The raider was brought down in France on its way home, and among its furniture was a large scale map of London. The incident was trifling in itself, but in many minds it raised unpleasant reflections. Our airplanes had beaten the invading Zeppelin. We might still have to face the invading airplane.

## CHAPTER CXXV.

### POLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS.

The Stress of a Long Campaign—Effect of Battle of the Somme on German Opinion—Small Result of Rumanian Successes—Von Groener's New War Bureau—The German *levée-en-masse*—German Conscription in Belgium—Grant of a Polish Constitution—Its Effect on Russia—Von Batocki's Failure—The Utterances of Official Germany—The Crown Prince's Interview—The Imperial Chancellor's Speeches—Forecast of Peace Proposals—Situation in Russia—German Overtures—The Meeting of the Duma—Miliukov's Indictment—Trepov becomes Premier—Position of Protopopov—Growing Movement for Reform—Peace Proposals in Italy—Speeches by Bissolati and Boselli—M. Briand's Government—The Secret Session—Reconstruction of the French Cabinet—General Lyautey becomes War Minister—Nivelle succeeds Joffre—Growing Weakness of Coalition Government in Britain—Reasons—Mr. Asquith resigns Office—Mr. Lloyd George becomes Prime Minister—The New War Cabinet—Causes of Mr. Asquith's Fall—His Character and Public Services.

THE closing months of 1916 were remarkable for a series of political upheavals and transformations among all the belligerents such as attend inevitably the advanced stages of a great struggle. The first optimism is succeeded by discouragement, which is followed in turn by a fatalistic resolution. But the stauncher this resolution grows, and the more certain the assurance of ultimate victory, the less tolerant will a nation be of supineness and blundering in its governors. If a

man is called upon to make extreme sacrifices he will not readily permit any class of his fellows to escape more easily, and if his doings are tried by a hard test he will apply a rigorous touchstone to the performance of his betters. Moreover, if a Ministry at such a stage is apt to be sternly judged, its task has also very special intrinsic difficulties. The nearer the end of war approaches the more urgent becomes the duty of prevision, and the more difficult its fulfilment. All the ancient landmarks and guide-posts have gone; the old world which endured into the first year or so of war has now vanished; and, if the statesmen are still the same as those who administered that lost world, they are handicapped by irrelevant memories. Lastly, war weariness will have overtaken many who started on the road with a brisk step and a purposeful eye, and a nation, warming slowly towards a supreme effort, will be impatient of leaders who seem to falter and fumble.

In Germany the ferment stopped short of its natural effect. No Minister fell from power, but the Government at large was driven into strange courses. Happily for itself it had to deal with a docile people—a credulous people who accepted incredible things, an obedient people who swallowed with scarcely a grimace unpalatable medicines. Yet even in Germany public opinion could not be wholly neglected, and the policy of the German Government was directed not less to explaining away the crisis which faced them than to taking steps to meet it.

The Battle of the Somme, as we have seen, had profoundly affected German popular opinion. No official obscurantism could conceal its ravages; in-



deed the very silence of the newspapers, and the minimizing tone which they adopted in their infrequent comments, increased the mysterious awe which cloaked that front. The plain man knew only that the place was thick with his kinsfolks' graves, and all who possessed any influence struggled to have their friends sent eastwards rather than to that ill-omened angle of Picardy. Instructed military opinion was aware that for the first time the German machine had been utterly outmatched, and that France and Britain had prepared their own weapon, growing daily in strength, which, unless a miracle happened, must sooner or later break down the German defence. The storms of the autumn had given them a brief respite, but the blow had not been parried, but only deferred. A horror of the place fell on the German people, from the simplest peasant to the most exalted commanders. More and more they saw advancing from Picardy the shadows of catastrophe—

“ The darkness of that battle in the West  
Where all of high and holy dies away.”

In such a time of depression von Falkenhayn's Rumanian success came as a blessed stimulant to the national spirit. A hungry people were promised a bounty of Rumanian corn and oil ; the swift campaign seemed to show German arms as resistless as ever ; the fate of Rumania was a warning to any neutral that might dare to draw the sword against the Teutonic League. But on this matter the High Command could have no delusions. Their pæans of triumph were not sincere, but designed for theatrical effects. They had driven back the armies

of a little nation which was desperately short of munitions and had made a serious strategical blunder ; but the success had small bearing on the real problem. It was as if a gang of bullies in a street fight, who were being slowly forced to the wall, should espy an urchin pressing forward unwisely from the ranks of their assailants, and by a well-placed kick put him out of action, and should claim the incident as a proof that they were impregnable against any assault. The extension of their lines to the Sereth shortened their Eastern front as compared with its position in September, but it did no more. It still gave them some extra hundreds of miles of line to hold as compared with August. The promise of Rumanian supplies had been falsified. The oil-fields were ablaze, and most of the grain had been destroyed or removed ; the balance was a mere drop in the bucket of Teutonic needs, and would only lead to bitter quarrels as to its allocation. Moreover, the Rumanian retreat had not perplexed or divided the Allies' plans. Russia was able and willing to cope with the situation, and not a man or a gun had been moved from the West. Germany—in the eyes of those best fitted to judge—had only added to her barren occupations of territory, and increased the commitments of her waning strength.

Hence, while the joy-bells rang in Berlin, and the Emperor repeated his familiar speech about his irresistible sword, the true rulers of Germany were busy with devices which proved that in their opinion the outlook was growing desperate. The two burning problems were the shortage of men and the shortage of supplies.

With regard to the first, during the early autumn

German policy seems to have wavered. At one time men were combed out from industries for the field; at another they were sent back to industrial life from the fighting line. But with November a great step was decided upon. A War Bureau was established, to which were handed over eight separate branches—the Works Department, the Field Ordnance Department, the Munitions Department, the War Raw Materials Department, the Factory Department, the Substitution Service Office, the Food Supply Department, and the Export and Import Department. At its head was placed one of the ablest of Germany's organizing brains, the Würtemberg soldier, General von Groener, who had previously been at the head of the Military Railway Service. This step seems to have been taken largely at the instigation of von Hindenburg, who in two letters to the Imperial Chancellor reviewed candidly the economic situation, and demanded the organized exploitation of every class of industrial and rural labour—of the former that the Allied efforts should be met and surpassed; of the latter that the former might have sufficient supplies to make their work effective. Accordingly the Patriotic Auxiliary Service Bill was passed by the Reichstag at the close of November, legalizing the *levée-en-masse*. Contrary to expectation, women were not included. Every male German between the ages of seventeen and sixty-one, who had not been summoned to the armed forces, was liable for auxiliary service, which was defined as consisting, "apart from service in Government offices or official institutions, in service in war industry, in agriculture, in the nursing of the sick, and in every

kind of organization of an economic character connected with the war, as well as in undertakings which are directly or indirectly of importance for the purpose of the conduct of the war or the provision of the requirements of the people." The recruitment was to be locally managed, and compulsion was not to be applied until the call for volunteers had failed. The purpose was twofold—to substitute as far as possible in the non-combatant branches men liable for auxiliary service for men liable for military service, and to make certain that the work of the civilian manhood of Germany was used in the spheres most vital for the conduct of the war:

In her quest of man-power Germany cast her net beyond her native territories. From the beginning of October onward the inhabitants of the occupied Belgian provinces were rigorously conscripted for war work on her behalf. Partly these were workmen already thrown out of employment by the closing down of Belgian factories, but largely they were men engaged in private undertakings who were peremptorily ordered to labour for their new masters. Slave raids—for they were nothing better—were conducted on a gigantic scale, and some hundreds of thousands of Flemings were carried over the German frontiers. When the labourers learned on what tasks they were to be employed, there was frequent resistance, and this was crushed with consistent brutality. Belgium had already been stripped of her industrial plant, her foodstuffs, and her rolling stock for Germany's benefit, and she had now to surrender the poor remnant of her man-power. Her Foreign Minister appealed to neutral countries and to the Vatican, and the scandal was

so great that President Wilson was moved to protest. For the moment the Allies were helpless. They were obliged by considerations of common humanity to continue their work of feeding the Belgian people by means of a neutral Commission, even though Germany was using it to her own advantage by exporting foodstuffs from Belgium, and suspending public relief works that she might have an excuse for her deportations. The reckoning must wait yet awhile, but the "man-hunting" of the autumn added to it another heavy item. The British Government, in the words of Lord Grey, could give Belgium only one answer: "That they will use their utmost power to bring the war to a speedy and successful conclusion, and thus to liberate Belgium once and for all from the dangers which continually menace her so long as the enemy remains in occupation of her territory. This is a cardinal aim and object of all the Allies, and the people of the British Empire have already been inspired by this latest proof of German brutality with renewed determination to make every sacrifice for the attainment of that end."

Germany looked also to the occupied territories in the East for a new recruitment. She had already made use of starvation to try and attract workmen from Russian Poland westward to her own factories. Now she took a bold step, for, with the object of enlisting Polish regiments for her army, she announced on 5th November that, in conjunction with Austria, she proposed to establish an independent Poland with an hereditary monarchy and a constitution. The thing had been long in the air, and the establishment of a Polish university at Warsaw

had been one of the steps to it; but the official announcement had been delayed so long as Berlin believed that there was hope of making a separate peace with Russia. Now that hope had gone, and Germany burned the boats that might have made a passage to Petrograd. The new Polish kingdom was to be a very small affair, for Posen and Galicia were not included. It was to be a satellite of the Central Powers, and some one of their numerous princelings would be set on this parody of the throne of John Sobieski. The very wording of the proclamation betrayed its purpose. There was to be a Polish army, with an "organization, training, and command" to be "regulated by mutual agreement," and the German Press, commenting on the point, made it clear that such an army was to be a mere reserve for Germany to draw upon. "Germany's security," wrote the semi-official *North German Gazette*, "demands that for all future times the Russian armies shall not be able to use a militarily consolidated Poland as an invasion gate of Silesia and West Prussia." With this motive so brazenly conspicuous, it required some audacity to claim that Germany and Austria now stood out nobly before the world as the true protectors of small nations. Von Hindenburg wanted recruits, and had demanded 700,000 by hook or by crook from Russian Poland.

The move was for Germany, there is little reason to doubt, a diplomatic blunder of the first magnitude. It deeply incensed Russia—even those elements in her Government which might have looked favourably on a separate peace. A proud nation will scarcely submit with equanimity to the spectacle

of another Power giving away its territory and conscripting its own subjects for a war against it. It did not mislead the Poles. Their long-seen and passionate desire for national unity could not be satisfied by such meagre territorial limits or such an ignoble vassaldom.

“ Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis  
Tempus eget.”

In the first months of the war the Grand Duke Nicholas, with the sanction of the Emperor, had given solemn pledges, and these remained the only complete charter of Polish unity and independence. Unhappily, the Polish people were split into many groups and rivalries, and there were elements, no doubt, which might be won over to the German policy. But the great mass of the race and its ablest leaders stood scornfully aloof. It is not easy to see what Germany gained by her proclamation. The manhood of Russian Poland had already been mainly recruited for the Russian ranks. In the great retreat of the summer of 1915, the vast proportion of the remaining able-bodied men had been swept eastward into Russian areas. So far as she could by vigorous enlistment for the Polish Legion,\* and by conscription for industrial work, Germany had already sucked the occupied territories dry. In

\* The Polish Legion, fighting under General Pilsudski on the Austrian side, grew out of the militant wing of the Polish Socialist party in Warsaw during the Russian revolutionary troubles of 1905. The militants, when repudiated by the party in 1906, withdrew to Galicia and organized on a military basis. Their numbers throughout the earlier campaigns were between 30,000 and 50,000.

the approbation of her own Press and the encomiums of her tame Warsaw professors, she had to look for her meagre reward.

To meet the second of her problems, the shortage of supplies, she had no very clear resource. The ingenious von Batocki had done his best to compel two and two to make five, but he had not succeeded; and beyond doubt, especially in the handling of the potato crop, grave errors had been committed, and certain areas and classes suffered not only from scanty rations but from a burning sense of unfair treatment. As the expected gains from the Rumanian campaign shrank into a very modest bounty, the problem of the Food Controller became insoluble.\* Only one course remained—to satisfy popular feeling by a ruthless submarine campaign. If Britain blockaded Germany, then Germany in turn would blockade Britain. We

\* A proof of the absorption of her man-power in war services and the scarcity of labour for ordinary production is given by the falling away of Germany's exports to neutrals as shown by the fall in value of the mark. The following table shows the depreciation at the close of 1916.

	Normal Value of 100 Marks.	Value in December 1916.
Sweden. . . .	88.88 kr.	56.50 kr.
Norway . . . .	88.88 kr.	60 kr.
Denmark . . . .	88.88 kr.	61 kr.
Holland . . . .	59.26 fl.	41.25 fl.
Switzerland . . .	123.44 fr.	83.45 fr.
U.S.A. . . . .	23.81 dol.	16.81 dol.

During November and the first half of December 1916 the fall per cent. was: in Sweden, 8; Holland, 6; Switzerland, 10. The fall was, of course, most marked in the countries from which Germany imported most.



have seen that from the close of August the successes of the German submarines had advanced in swift progression. Germany had repeatedly in all the seas broken the promises given to President Wilson in the preceding May ; but she managed with some skill to evade any spectacular breach which would raise the question again in an acute form, and, with a few exceptions, she left liners alone. Her underwater triumphs, zealously advertised in her Press, did something to console her people and encourage the hope that the Allied blockade must soon relax. But no dreams of the future could obliterate the extreme awkwardness of the present. Germany had before her nine months of short commons before she could look for any relief. Though the rations of her troops were not cut down below the standard necessary to ensure health and vigour, their monotony was a subject of universal complaint. In many interior districts the shortage was not very far removed from want, and there was a general under-nourishment of the whole people. The suffering was embittered by the suspicion, only too well founded, that certain classes were exempt from it, and were even waxing fat on the leanness of others. At no time in modern German history were the agrarian magnates of Prussia the object of such bitter criticism. Moreover, there was bad feeling between the constituent states. Bavaria and South Germany in general complained that they were being sacrificed to satisfy Prussia's need. In many a prisoners' camp on the Western front Bavarian and Brandenburger came to blows, and the subject of controversy, as often as not, was the greed of the Northerners.

The utterances of official Germany during the autumn and early winter provided an interesting reflex of the hopes and depressions which beset the German mind. In October the Imperial Crown Prince, who had of late fallen sadly out of the picture, sought rehabilitation by a discourse on the beauties of peace. His lyrical cry was confided to an American journalist, and formed one of the brief interludes of comedy in the grim business of war. He sighed over the commercial depravity of America, which had led her financiers to invest in the Allied chances of success, and quoted the Bible as a warning against the lust of gain. He deplored the expenditure of human talent on the work of destruction, and assured his interviewer that every man in the German ranks "would far rather see all this labour, skill, education, intellectual resource, and physical powers devoted to the task of upholding and lengthening life," such as the conquest of disease. He proclaimed his passion for domesticity, and his grief at being separated from his household. He paid modest tributes to the quality of the enemy. "It is a pity," he sighed, "that all cannot be gentlemen and sportsmen, even if we are enemies." And lastly he spoke of flowers and music, that he might complete the part of the Happy Warrior. It is safe to say that no more falsetto and ridiculous performance was staged by the theatrical German spirit during the campaign. In the same month a different type of man took up a different parable. Von Hindenburg informed a Viennese journalist that the situation on every front was secure and hopeful. He announced that he was ready, if necessary, for a thirty years' war. France

was even now exhausted. She had called Britain to her assistance, and "the help which her Ally gives is that she is forcing the French to destroy themselves." Britain had no military genius, and Russia's numbers could never learn true battle discipline. "How long will the war last? That depends upon our opponents. Prophecy is thankless, and it is better to abandon it in war-time. It is possible that 1917 will bring battles that will decide the war, but I do not know, and nobody knows. I only know that we will fight to a decision."

These were brave words. They were spoken to raise the drooping spirits of Austria, and they had their effect so long as daily advances east of the Carpathians could be reported. But the governing powers of Germany were not contemplating a thirty years' war; they were cudgelling their brains to think how their Rumanian success could be turned to profit, for well they knew that it was of use only as an advertisement, and that the true situation was very desperate. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg on 9th November made a speech in the Reichstag which showed the inmost cogitations of Berlin. The orations of the Imperial Chancellor were at all times a good barometer of German opinion, for their mechanical adroitness revealed more than it concealed. During 1915 he had explicitly stated his aim as such an increase of strength as would enable Germany to defy an United Europe. "If Europe is to arrive at peace, it can only be through the strong and inviolable position of Germany"—a revival of the policy of Charles V. and Louis XIV. In the first half of 1916 his tone was the same. Belgium and Poland must be brought under the

control of Germany, and peace could only be considered on the basis of the war-map. But after the misfortunes of the summer he changed his phrasing. On 29th September he announced: "From the first day the war meant for us nothing but the defence of our right to life, freedom, and development;" but he left the last word, the crux of the whole matter, undefined.

The speech of 9th November was skilfully advertised beforehand, and had obviously been prepared with great care as the starting-point of a new diplomatic phase. It *Nov. 9.* contained the usual roseate summary of the situation upon all the fronts; but its importance lay in the fact that for the first time the Imperial Chancellor talked at large about peace. He laboured to prepare the right atmosphere by showing that Germany's hands were clean, that she had had no intention of conquest when she drew the sword, and that from first to last she had waged a defensive war. He attempted to cast upon Russia the whole responsibility for the immediate outbreak, since the "act which made war inevitable was the Russian general mobilization ordered on the night of July 30-31, 1914." It is needless to contradict a statement which was overwhelmingly disproved by the published evidence; but the Imperial Chancellor made public one fact of which the world had hitherto been ignorant. On July 29, 1914, it appeared that, alarmed by the possibility of British interference, he had telegraphed to Vienna to urge mediation, and that Vienna had assented. The responsibility of the breach, therefore, lay with Russia, he argued, who had continued her military prepara-

tions. But Russia had only mobilized in consequence of the mobilization already ordered by Austria, and, in spite of the joint mobilization, conversations between Vienna and Petrograd were continuing, and promised well. Why, then, did Germany on 1st August launch her ultimatum on Russia, and so shatter the last hope of a peaceful settlement? Von Bethmann-Hollweg's disclosures, instead of helping his case, made it definitely worse. They showed that Germany, on 29th July, scared by the attitude of Britain and Italy, wanted to gain time. They showed that Austria, still more badly scared, was quite willing to compromise. There was a chance of peace, and Germany, long determined on war, had no other course but to accept all risks, and force it by her ultimatum of 1st August.

The Imperial Chancellor's dubious historical retrospect was the basis for a declaration on the subject of the future after the war. Lord Grey of Fallodon, in an earlier speech, had spoken of an international league to preserve peace. The German Chancellor professed himself in agreement. But peace could only be ensured "if the principle of free development was made to prevail not only on the land but on the sea." And it must involve the dissolution of all aggressive coalitions. The Triple Entente had been based solely on jealousy of and hostility towards Germany, while the Central Powers had never had any thought but an honourable defence. Let peace come, said the Chancellor, and let it be guaranteed by the strongest sanction that the wit of man can devise, and Germany will gladly co-operate—provided it allows for her free and just

development. On the word "development" hung all the law and the prophets.

The speech, it is clear, was addressed to neutral opinion rather than to the speaker's countrymen. It aimed at creating an atmosphere of reasonableness. Conquering Germany, fresh from her brilliant Rumanian victories, and unbeaten on every front, was prepared to appeal to the sense of decency of the neutral world. She, the victor, alone could speak with dignity of peace. It needed little acumen to see that the Imperial Chancellor's utterance was the first move in a new game.

The political situation in Russia during the autumn was in the highest degree confused and perplexing. On one point, indeed, the issue was clear. The German arrogance in Poland received its proper answer. Russia restated the views which she had already publicly expressed, and announced that nothing would drive her from her purpose of creating a free and united Poland under her protection, "from all three of her now incomplete tribal districts." The Prime Ministers of France and Britain telegraphed their gratitude for "the generous initiative taken by His Majesty the Emperor in aid of a people to whom we are attached by ancient sympathies, and the restoration of whose union will constitute a prime factor of future equilibrium in Europe."

But in domestic politics there was no such unity of purpose. The people were, indeed, united, and had shown throughout two years of suffering and trial a constancy which is beyond praise. In Pushkin's famous phrase, "a heavy hammer shivers glass

but forges steel," and Russia had won upon the anvil of war a tempered resolution. But the Government and the so-called governing classes were not the equal of the nation and the army. There were elements there of scandalous corruption; there were sections whose sympathies were avowedly with German bureaucracy rather than Russian freedom; there were many who feared democracy as a foul skin dreads cold water; there were sinister influences at work whose power lay in the erotic and neurotic mysticism of the East. All these dark things, fearing daylight and the will of a liberated people, had affinities with Germany, and could not face with comfort the defeat of the great anti-democratic Power. It was to such elements that Germany appealed in her abortive attempts at a separate peace. The first was in the summer of 1915, when the reactionary Ministers, Sukhomlinov, Shcheglovitov, and Maklakov, fell from power. That attempt was frustrated by the influence of the army and the Duma, which grew as the skies darkened during the Great Retreat. But the sun of prosperity in 1916 brought the parasites to life again. M. Boris Stürmer became Prime Minister in succession to M. Goremykin, and in August M. Sazonov, the Foreign Minister, and in many ways Russia's ablest civilian statesman, was dismissed, and his portfolio taken over by the Premier. Once again Germany made a bid, and with some hope of success. What her proposals were will not be known for many a day; but they seem to have embraced the opening of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, the offer to Russia of Armenia and Persia, Eastern Galicia, the Bukovina, and possibly

Moldavia, an independent Poland with a Russian Grand Duke as king, and certain special rights for Germans in Lithuania and in the Baltic provinces.

Whatever the proposals were, there is no doubt that they were reasonable and attractive, for Germany very seriously meant business. There was never for one moment a chance of a separate peace. Had the Russian Government accepted any such overtures, there would have been a revolution next morning—a revolution both bloodless and final, for the Army would have engineered it. But the purblind eyes of the bureaucrats were not open to this certainty. There was a serious risk that they might commit themselves to some folly, and, in dread of popular reprisals, attempt to stir up an abortive revolt, which they could use as an excuse for stern reactionary measures. M. Protopopov was added to the Ministry, with the portfolio of the Interior, and this kindled the suspicions of patriotic Russia. M. Protopopov had been Vice-President of the Duma, an Octobrist and a member of the Progressist *bloc*. But for some unknown reason he had changed his side, apparently on his return from his visit to Britain in the spring, and had become an ally of the reactionaries.

On Tuesday, 14th November, the Duma met. It was a stormy sitting, and the Ministry was torn to shreds by the Progressist critics. In especial, M. Miliukov, the leader of the *Nov. 14*. Cadets, attacked the Premier in one of the most outspoken speeches ever made on Russian soil. He accused him of corruption and anti-patriotism, and he did not hesitate to name the dark forces behind him. Patriotic members of every group supported



the Cadet leader, and M. Stürmer was left with the alternatives of dissolving the Duma or resigning. The Emperor refused to permit the first course, and accordingly the Premier went out of office, though not out of power, for he was immediately given a high Court appointment. His fall was brought about not only by M. Miliukov's speech, but by his mishandling of the food question and the Rumanian situation, and by the fact that the Army chiefs were to a man his opponents. He was succeeded by M. Trepov, who as Minister of Communications had done good work in the construction of the new railways. M. Trepov was a strong Conservative, and far removed in sympathy from the *bloc*; but he was a Nationalist and an honest man, and he earnestly desired to come to a working agreement with the Duma, for he realized that on such an alliance Russia's military efficiency in the near future would largely depend. He was a statesman of the Stolypin type, who believed that "His Majesty's Government must be carried on."

His aim was a Ministry of experts and business men, a mobilization of the best national talent. But he was handicapped from the start, for he was compelled to retain the deeply suspect M. Protopopov at the Interior. When the Duma met again on 2nd December after ten days' adjournment the situation was no easier. The new Premier was able to announce for the first time in public the agreement of 1915 between Russia, France, Britain, and Italy, which definitely established Russia's right to Constantinople and the Straits. He made an eloquent appeal to all parties to close up their ranks,

and promised various domestic reforms ; but he was heard impatiently, for so long as M. Protopopov remained in the Cabinet there could be no co-operation even with the conservative elements in the Duma. The demand of all the Nationalist parties was now the same—for Ministers who had the confidence of the nation. It was men and not measures that were sought ; a cabinet of single-minded statesmen who in civil life could reproduce something of the clean and steadfast purpose of the soldiers. It was an aim endorsed not only by the Duma but by the Council of the Empire and by the Congress of the Nobility. But dark and stormy paths had still to be traversed before the ideal was attained.

In Italy the Boselli Government had no crisis to face such as threatened others of the Allies. The chief event of the autumn and early winter was a futile attempt on the part of the extreme Socialists to commit the Chamber to peace negotiations, for which German agents were striving throughout the world to create an atmosphere. On *Oct. 13.* 13th October Signor Bissolati, the Civil Commissioner of War in the Cabinet, had spoken strongly on the matter. "I think that any State or States of the Alliance which to-day harboured thoughts of peace would be guilty of an act of treason. Rather than accept peace contaminated with the germs of future wars it would have been better not to have embarked on the present struggle at all. The germ of war can only be killed by destroying Austria as a State, and by depriving Germany of every illusion of predominance." Italy,

as we have already seen, had difficulties peculiar to herself. Her popular feeling was mobilized rather against Austria than Germany, and the ancient ramifications of German intrigue and German finance in her midst, combined with the very real economic suffering which the war now entailed, made her liable to sudden spasms of popular discontent and suspicion. Almost alone among the Allies, she had an avowed anti-war and Germanophil party to reckon with. At the end of November the pro-German Socialists in the Chamber, led by a Jew of German extraction, brought forward a motion in favour of immediate peace, to be secured by the mediation of the United States of America. About the same time Mr. Jacob Schiff, the German-Jewish banker, was flying his peace kite in New York. The Chamber dealt drastically with the motion, rejecting it by 293 votes to 47, and Signor Boselli, the Premier, restated in eloquent words the central principle of the Allies. "Peace must be a pact born of armed victory—a peace for which Italy has drawn the sword in the name of maritime and territorial claims, that are not mere poetry, but a reality of her history and of her existence; a peace which, in order to be lasting, must replace the equilibrium of the old treaties by an equilibrium built up upon the rights of nationalism. We seek not the peace of a day, but the peace of new centuries."

The Government of M. Briand had not at any time an easy seat, and during the early winter it had to face a series of petty crises. In France there was no ebullition of pacificism worth the name. The futile demonstration of the Socialist, M. Brizon, in

September was overwhelmed by the Premier's torrential eloquence, and its author held up to general ridicule. But M. Briand held office rather because no alternative was very obvious than because he had the assent of all parties. He was somewhat autocratic in his methods, and preferred to govern with the minimum of parliamentary assistance. The difficulties in the Near East, in which France had a peculiar interest, and the apparent futility of the Allied policy in Greece, did not make his task simpler.

The discontent of the opposition came to a head in the close of November and beginning of December. The scarcity of coal, the high price of food, the losses of the Somme campaign, certain failures in transport, and doubts as to the capacity of various elements in the High Command made the basis for criticism of the Government. In a series of stormy secret sessions, which revealed a curious regrouping of parties, M. Briand was called upon to defend his policy. He succeeded, though his majority dwindled and most of the deputies on leave from the Front were found voting in the minority. The result of the debates was that he was given a mandate to reconstruct his Government, and to reorganize the High Command. The first was a matter of consolidation and readjustment, rather than the sweeping innovation which about the same time was taking place in Britain. The Cabinet was made smaller, three departments being grouped under one chief. The Prime Minister still held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, M. Ribot remained at the Exchequer, and Admiral Lacaze at the Ministry of Marine. An inner executive Cabinet was

constructed in the shape of a War Committee of five on the British model. The most interesting appointment was that of General Lyautey, the Resident-General in Morocco, to the Ministry of War. On his great ability and experience all Frenchmen were agreed ; but there was some doubt as to how a soldier, whose life had been mainly spent abroad, and who had no parliamentary experience, would work with the Chamber. It looked as if the extra-parliamentary nature of the administration, which had been the chief topic of M. Briand's critics, was to be accentuated by the reconstruction.

Far more remarkable were the changes in the High Command. General Joffre relinquished the office of Generalissimo, which he had held since the outbreak of war, and became military adviser to the new War Committee. He was created a Marshal of France, the first holder of that famous title to be appointed by the Third Republic. The new Marshal had well earned his retirement from the exacting duties of the Front. His services to his country and to the Allied cause had been beyond all computation, and in the history of the war his is one of the two or three names that will shine most brightly. To his skill and nerve and patience was due the triumph of the Marne, won when the skies were darkest, which destroyed for ever the German hope of victory. He had been, like Ajax, the pillar and shield of his people, and his rock-like figure had held the confidence of his country since the guns first opened in Alsace. To him more than to any other man was due the superb military effort of France and her unyielding resolution. He had brilliant lieutenants, some of them his superiors in the technical

accomplishments of a soldier, but his was always the deciding will and the directing brain.

The new Generalissimo in the West was General Nivelle, the commander of the Second Army in the Meuse area. At the beginning of the war he had been no more than a colonel, and in a little over two years he had risen to the command of the main armies of his country. It was a dazzling rise, amply earned by many hard campaigns, and he had crowned a great reputation by the recent battles at Verdun. Partly English in blood, he had many characteristics in common with Sir Douglas Haig, and the two chiefs of the Allied armies in the most vital terrain were at one in their conception of policy. The campaign had many times changed its character. The phase between Mons and First Ypres was as different from the Somme battles as Waterloo was different from Sadowa. The direction of the final phase was now in the hands of men still in the prime of manhood, who might be regarded as the pioneers of the new methods of war.

During the autumn it was becoming clear that the Coalition Government in Britain was rapidly losing public confidence. There was perhaps less capacious criticism of particular Ministers than there had been a year before ; but there was a deep-seated dissatisfaction, and an impatience the more dangerous in that it was more rarely expressed in words. The root of the feeling was the belief that the Government was too much inclined to try to cure an earthquake by small political pills. "The war is a cyclone," Mr. Lloyd George had told the trade unions, "which is tearing up by the roots the

ornamental plants of modern society, and wrecking some of the flimsy trestle bridges of modern civilization. It is an earthquake which is upheaving the very rocks of European life. It is one of those seismic disturbances in which nations leap forward or fall back generations in a single bound." The ordinary citizen believed this, and looked for proofs of a like conviction in the public acts of his Government.

The Coalition formed in May 1915 had not been a mobilization of the best talent of the nation, but a compromise between party interests. It contained most of the men who in the previous Liberal Government had been responsible for the inevitable mistakes and over-confidence of the first nine months of war. Its guiding principle had resembled too closely that of an ordinary British Government in times of peace—to keep the Ministry together at all costs by a series of eirenica and formulas ill suited for a supreme crisis, for as has been well said, "the tremulous cohesion of a vacillating Ministry is not the same thing as national unity."\* It had seemed to many people to lack courage. All its members declared that great sacrifices were necessary for victory; but when it came to the question of a particular sacrifice they were apt to hesitate. The result of the National Service controversy proved that this hesitation was needless. In this, as in other matters, the people were ahead of their governors.

It would be unfair to deny that a vast deal of good work had been done between May 1915 and December 1916, and some of the administrative

\* *Quarterly Review*, January 1917.

achievements were a proud part of Britain's record. But in many vital matters efficiency was to seek. Generally speaking, there was far more political than administrative talent among Ministers. Further, the main machinery was not fitted for the prompt dispatch of business. A Cabinet of twenty-three members, even with the added device of special War Committees, is not an ideal body for prompt decision and quick action. To quote Mr. Lloyd George again, "you cannot conduct a war with a sanhedrin."

During the autumn of 1916 men of all classes were beginning to ask themselves whether the Government, as then constituted, was capable of bringing the war to a successful issue. Instances of apparent timidity and lack of forethought and imagination had so grown in number as to constitute a weighty, if unformulated, indictment in the popular mind. Many of the charges were unfair. The unsatisfactory position in the Near East sprang from causes most of which could not be rightly laid to the charge of the Coalition. The disasters of Rumania were blamed, with little reason, on the Foreign Office. The halt of the British advance on the Somme, due to bad weather, was made the occasion by certain irresponsible critics for declaring that the great battle had failed, that our Western strategy was a blunder, and that the lives of our young men had been squandered in vain. But there were other complaints which had greater substance. The whole question of pensions was unsatisfactory, and there was growing discontent among the classes concerned. The Air Board seemed to be without a clear policy; the revival of German long-range submarine activity,



contrary to popular expectation, suggested that all was not well at the Admiralty. The military authorities had warned the nation that we should have to make large further levies on our man-power ; and at the end of September 1915 a Man-Power Distribution Board was appointed to deal with the matter. The Board recommended a wholesale drafting of semi-skilled and unskilled men below a certain age into the Army, and the filling of their places by volunteers and women. Its report was submitted on 9th November, but the immediate action required was not taken. Finally the rise of prices convinced every householder that presently, unless something was done, there would be a serious shortage of food and conceivably a famine. This was perhaps the most conspicuous case of lack of foresight on the part of the Coalition Government. In June 1915 a Committee had been appointed under Lord Milner to consider the question of food production at home. A month later it reported, urging among other things, that a guarantee of prices should be given for wheat grown on land broken up from grass, and that the country should be organized in local units for the distribution of labour and the supply of seeds and fertilizers. The report was pigeon-holed, the Government accepting the view of the Minority Report that the submarine menace was now well in hand ; that there was no fear of a short supply of wheat from abroad ; and that it was " unnecessary to adopt any extraordinary measures to ensure a home-grown supply, even if the war should extend beyond the autumn of 1916." In the said autumn this complacency had been rudely broken. On November 15, 1916, Mr. Run-

ciman announced the appointment of a Food Controller ; but no Food Controller was forthcoming, since no responsible man *Nov. 15.* would undertake a post which it was proposed to make a mere impotent appendage of the Board of Trade. Even at that late date the Government seemed only to toy with the idea of action.

It is probable that for many months the vast majority of the people of Britain had been convinced that a change was necessary. But the Government was slow to read the weather signs. With the conservatism that a long term of power engenders, its chief members found some difficulty in envisaging an alternative ministry. They were patriotic men, who earnestly desired their country's victory, and they feared that Cabinet changes and resignations would weaken the strength of the nation and the confidence of the Allies. Hence, when the blow came, there was a tendency to attribute it to a malign conspiracy and a calumnious Press. It is hard to believe, however, that in the crisis of such a war as this any Government could have been driven from office by backstair intrigues or by the most skilful newspaper cabal. Besides, the Press on the whole was on the side of the Coalition. The papers which criticized owed their effect solely to the fact that they echoed what was in most men's minds. Mr. Asquith's Government fell because the mass of the people had come to believe, rightly or wrongly, that it was not the kind of administration to beat the enemy.

The details of the story are still obscure, and in any case, among so many greater events, they have little importance. We may briefly summarize the

published facts. Towards the end of November Mr. Asquith, after much discussion, resolved to reduce the numbers of the War Committee, and increase the frequency of its sittings.\* Mr. Lloyd George was not satisfied with the change, and announced that he could not remain a member of the Government unless the reform was more drastic. He made certain proposals which the Prime Minister asked for time to consider. On Sunday, 3rd

*Dec. 3.* December, the Unionist members of the Government urged Mr. Asquith to tender his resignation, proposing, if he did so, also to tender theirs, that the field might be clear for reconstruction.

*Dec. 5.* On 5th December Mr. Asquith definitely declined Mr. Lloyd George's scheme, and Mr. Lloyd George resigned office. That evening the Prime Minister tendered his own resignation. The King sent for Mr. Bonar Law, who, after twenty-four hours' delay, declared himself unable to form an administration. The King accordingly

*Dec. 7.* summoned Mr. Lloyd George, who on the evening of 7th December kissed hands as Prime Minister.

Mr. Lloyd George's first task was to appoint a War Cabinet. He called to it Lord Milner and Mr. Arthur Henderson as Ministers without portfolios ; Lord Curzon, the new President of the Council ; and Mr. Bonar Law, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer ; while he himself acted as its chairman. This body of five was entrusted with all matters pertaining to the conduct of the war. Sir Edward

\* It consisted of seven members—the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Bonar Law, Lord Curzon, Mr. Balfour, Mr. M'Kenna, and Mr. Montagu.

Carson became First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Balfour Foreign Secretary, and Lord Derby Secretary for War. Some interesting experiments were made, experts with little or no parliamentary experience being brought to special departments—Sir Albert Stanley to the Board of Trade, Mr. H. A. L. Fisher to the Education Office, Sir Joseph Maclay to the new Shipping Department, Mr. Prothero to the Board of Agriculture, and Sir S. H. Lever to the Treasury as Financial Secretary. The posts in the new Ministry were roughly divided between Liberal and Labour members and Unionists. All the Liberal Cabinet Ministers followed the late Prime Minister into retirement; but at a party meeting on 13th December, under the direction of Mr. Asquith, they pledged themselves *Dec. 13.* to give Mr. Lloyd George's administration a fair trial.

The fate of Mr. Asquith's Government will, it is probable, be for future historians something of a landmark in the political history of Britain. It marked, some have argued, the end of the pre-eminence of a school of thought which had flourished since the fat days of the Victorian era; a school which had done good service in its day, and which contained many elements of permanent worth, but which had been invested by its votaries with a Sinaitic sanction that no poor creed of mortal statecraft could long sustain. These matters lie outside the province of a historian of the war. But, since contemporary public opinion is within that province, we may briefly inquire why a Government so solidly buttressed should suffer such a sudden eclipse. What-

ever be our view of the necessity of the change of Ministers, we can admit that the manner of it was ungracious. The late Prime Minister and the late Foreign Secretary, who had laboured long and hard in the service of their country, retired to the accompaniment of much coarse abuse from a section of the Press. As a race we are magnanimous, and not careless of the decencies. Whence came this lapse from our normal practice? Whence sprang the nearly universal conviction that horses must be swopped, however turbulent the stream?

It is to be observed, in the first place, that a change of leaders in a long struggle is the usual practice of nations. In most of the great wars of history the men, both soldiers and civilians, who began the struggle have not been those who concluded it. Lincoln was the exception, not the rule. Since August 1914, in all the belligerent States there had been much shuffling of Cabinets and Commands. Germany had seen three successive chiefs of the General Staff, and if the same Imperial Chancellor continued in office, it was only because he was removed beyond the reach of the mutations of the popular will. In Russia the leadership of the armies had already passed from the Grand Duke Nicholas to Alexeiev, and from Alexeiev to Gourko; the Premiership from Goremykin to Stürmer, and from Stürmer to Trepov. Italy had changed her Premier once; France had had several Cabinet reconstructions, and had now got a new Commander-in-Chief. Among departmental heads in every country there had been a continuous and bewildering exchange; France had had three Ministers of War, Britain two, and Russia three—

to take the office where change was *prima facie* least desirable. The British Prime Minister and the British Foreign Secretary seemed almost the only stable things in a shifting world.

That new leaders should be demanded in a strife which affects national existence is as inevitable as the changes of the seasons. The problems of the second and third stages of a war are not those of the first stage, and the man who has borne the heat and burden of the morning will be apt to bring a stale body and a wearied brain to the tasks of the afternoon. Few leaders are so elastic in mind that, having given all their strength to one set of problems, they can turn with unabated vigour to new needs and new conditions. The odds are that the man who has shown himself an adept in a patient defensive will not be the man to lead a swift advance. Again, every war is a packet of surprises, and the early stages must be strewn with failures. History may rate the general who has endured and learned the lessons of failure far higher than his successor who reaps the fruit of that learning, but contemporaries have not this just perspective. The nature of the popular mind must be reckoned with, and that mind will turn eagerly from one who is identified with dark days of stress to one who comes to his task with a more cheerful record. The nation, which bears the brunt of the struggle, must be able to view its leaders with hopefulness, and in all novelty there is hope.

The demand for change is likely to be the stronger in the case of a civilian Government, if its members entered upon the war already weary from long years of office, and if one of their claims to fame

has been skill in the normal type of politics, a type which has been wrecked by the new era and has left in the popular mind a strong distaste. This was very notably the case with Mr. Asquith and some of his chief supporters. The Liberal Government had been continuously in office since the close of 1905 ; it had gone through three General Elections ; it had been engaged in many bitter disputes, and had weathered more than one desperate crisis. After eight such difficult years there must inevitably have followed some decline in the elasticity and vigour of those who were responsible in such stormy waters for the ship of State. Again, those eight years had been years of conspicuous success in party management. The art of directing the House of Commons had never been carried higher than by Mr. Asquith, and great was the skill of those lieutenants who cultivated and manipulated the caucus. But after three months of war the caucus was futile, and the party catchwords meaningless. More, there was growing up in the popular mind a dislike of the whole business, a suspicion, not wholly baseless, that Britain owed some of her misfortunes to this particular *expertise*. The skill, so loudly acclaimed a year before both by those who benefited and by those who suffered from it, seemed now not only useless but sinister. The dapper political expert was as much in the shadow as the champion faro player in a western American township which has been visited by a religious revival. It was no question of political creed. The same fate would have overtaken a Conservative or a Labour Government if it had been in power before the war. It was the reaction of the plain man, plunged into a

desperate crisis, against the standards of a vanished world.

Lastly, there was that in the temperament and talents of the Prime Minister himself upon which the nation had begun to look coldly. His great ability no man could question—his oratorical gifts, his diplomatic skill, his shrewd and closely reasoning mind. Not less conspicuous were his endowments of character. He had admirable nerve and courage, and as a consequence he was the most loyal of colleagues, for he never shrank from accepting the burden of his own mistakes and those of his subordinates. He was incapable of intrigue in any form. He had true personal dignity, caring little for either abuse or praise, and shunning the arts of self-advertisement. But he left on the ordinary mind the impression that he thought more of argument than of action. To most men he was identified with a political maxim enjoining delay, and in many matters his Ministry had been too late. He was a man of the old *régime*, devoted to traditional methods and historic watchwords; and the nation asked whether such a man could have that eye for the “instant need of things” which an unprecedented crisis demands. It seemed to his critics impossible to expect the unresting activity and the bold origination which the situation required from one whose habits of mind and work were cast in the more leisurely mould of the older school of statesmen.

When a people judges there is usually justice in its verdict, and it is idle to argue that Mr. Asquith was a perfect, or perhaps the best available, leader in war time. But history will not let his remarkable



services go unrecorded. In August 1914 he had led the nation in the path of honour and political wisdom. No man had stated more eloquently the essential principles for which Britain fought, or held to them more resolutely. In a tangle of conflicting policies he had kept always in the mind of the public the vital point of our quarrel with the Central Powers. And if his optimism had at times an unfortunate effect, there can be no doubt but that his steady nerve, coolness, and patience did much to keep an even temper in the people during days of disappointment and darkness. He departed from office with the dignity that he had worn in power, and he behaved throughout in all respects not as a party chief but as a patriot. History will see in him a great debater, a great parliamentarian, a great public servant, and a great gentleman.

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## APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

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### THE BRITISH AT SALONIKA.

#### GENERAL MILNE'S DISPATCH.

WAR OFFICE,  
*December 6, 1916.*

THE Secretary of State for War has received the following dispatch from Lieutenant-General G. F. Milne, C.B., D.S.O., Commanding British Salonika Army :—

HEADQUARTERS,  
BRITISH SALONIKA ARMY,  
*October 8, 1916.*

SIR,—I have the honour to submit the following report on the operations carried out by the British Salonika Army since I assumed command on May 9, in accordance with instructions received from the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Egyptian Expeditionary Force.

On that date the greater part of the Army was concentrated within the fortified lines of Salonika, extending from Stavros on the east to near the Galiko River on the west ; a mixed force, consisting of a mounted brigade and a division, had been pushed forward to the north of Kukush, in order to support the French Army which had advanced and was watching the right bank of the Struma River and the northern frontier of Greece. Further moves in this direction were contemplated, but, in order to keep the Army concentrated, I entered into an agreement with General Sarraill by which the

British forces should become responsible for that portion of the Allied front which covered Salonika from the east and north-east. By this arrangement a definite and independent area was allotted to the Army under my command. On June 8 the troops commenced to occupy advanced positions along the right bank of the River Struma and its tributary the River Butkova from Lake Tachinos to Lozista village. By the end of July, on the demobilization of the Greek Army, this occupation had extended to the sea at Chai Aghizi. Along the whole front the construction of a line of resistance was begun ; work on trenches, entanglements, bridgeheads, and supporting points was commenced ; for administrative purposes the reconstruction of the Salonika-Seres road was undertaken, and the cutting of wagon tracks through the mountainous country was pushed forward.

On July 20, in accordance with the policy 'laid down in my instructions, and in order to release French troops for employment elsewhere, I began to take over the line south and west of Lake Doiran, and commenced preparations for a joint offensive on this front. This move was completed by August 2, and on the 10th of that month an offensive was commenced against the Bulgarian defences south of the line Doiran-Hill 535. The French captured Hills 227 and La Tortue, while the British occupied in succession those features of the main 535 ridge now known as Kidney Hill and Horseshoe Hill, and, pushing forward, established a series of advanced posts on the line Doldzeli-Reselli. The capture of Horseshoe Hill was successfully carried out on the night August 17-18 by the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry at the point of the bayonet in the face of stubborn opposition. The enemy's counter-attacks were repulsed with heavy loss.

As a result of these operations it became possible to shorten considerably the Allied line between Doiran Lake and the River Vardar, and on August 29, in agreement with General Sarraïl, I extended my front as far as the left bank of that

river, so as to set free more troops for his offensive operations. This relief was completed by August 31, the position then held extending from Hill 420 to the Vardar River just north of Smol. In the Struma Valley a French mounted detachment was at the same time pushed forward to Seres.

#### BULGARIAN INVASION OF MACEDONIA.

On August 17 the Bulgarians, who at the end of May had entered Greek territory by the Struma Valley and moved down as far as Demir Hissar, continued their advance into Greek Macedonia. Columns of all arms advanced from seven different points, between Sarisaban, on the Mesta, and Demir Hissar. The four eastern columns converged on the country about Drama and Kavala, while the remainder moved southwards on to the line of the Struma from Demir Hissar towards Orfano. On August 19 a mounted brigade with one battery carried out a strong reconnaissance, and found the enemy in some force on the line Prosenik-Barakli Djuma; on the following day, after being reinforced by a battalion, this brigade again advanced in conjunction with the French detachment. These attacking troops, after encountering the enemy in force on the line Kalendra-Prosenik-Haznatar, withdrew after dark to the right bank of the Struma. The French detachment was subsequently placed under the orders of the General Officer Commanding British troops on this front, and received instructions to co-operate in the defence of the river line.

On August 21 the railway bridge near Angista Station was demolished by a detachment from the Neohori garrison, and three days later two road bridges over the Angista River were destroyed. Both these operations were well carried out by yeomanry, engineers, and cyclists in the face of hostile opposition.

The Bulgarians continued their advance into Eastern Macedonia unopposed by the Greek garrison, and it was estimated that by the end of August the enemy's forces, extending from Demir Hissar southwards in the Seres sector

of the Struma front, comprised the complete VII. Bulgarian Division, with two or three regiments of the XI. Macedonian Division, which had moved eastwards from their positions on the Beles mountain to act as a reserve to the VII. Division, and at the same time to occupy the defences from Vetrina-Puljovo northwards. Opposite the Lower Struma was a brigade of the II. Division, with a brigade of the X. Division, in occupation of the coast and the zone of country between Orfano and the Drama-Kavala road. This brigade of the X. Division was supported by another brigade in the Drama-Kavala area. As a result of this advance and of a similar move in the west, General Sarrail decided to entrust to the British Army the task of maintaining the greater portion of the right and centre of the Allied line.

#### STRUMA CROSSED AT SIX PLACES.

On September 10 detachments crossed the river above Lake Tachinos at five places between Bajraktar Mah and Dragos, while a sixth detachment crossed lower down at Neohori. The villages of Oraoman and Kato Gudeli were occupied, and the Northumberland Fusiliers gallantly captured Nevolien, taking 30 prisoners and driving the enemy out of the village. The latter lost heavily during their retirement and in their subsequent counter-attack. They also suffered severely from our artillery fire in attempting to follow our prearranged movements to regain the right bank of the river.

On the 15th similar operations were undertaken, six small columns crossing the river between Lake Tachinos and Orljak bridge. The villages of Kato Gudeli, Dzami Mah, Agomah, and Komarjan were burnt, and 27 prisoners were taken. The enemy's counter-attacks completely broke down under the accurate fire of our guns on the right bank of the river. On the 23rd a similar scheme was put into action, but a sudden rise of three feet in the Struma interfered with the bridging operations. Nevertheless the enemy's trenches at Yenimah were captured, 14 prisoners taken, and three other villages

raided. Considerable help was given on each occasion by the French detachment under Colonel Bescoins, and much information was obtained which proved to be of considerable value during subsequent operations.

On the Doiran-River Vardar front there remained as before the whole of the Bulgarian IX. Division, less one regiment, a brigade of the II. Division, and at least two-thirds of the German 101st Division, which had entrenched the salient north of Machukovo on the usual German system. To assist the general offensive by the Allies, I ordered this salient to be attacked at the same time as the Allied operations in the Florina area commenced. With this object in view the whole of the enemy's entrenched position was subjected to a heavy bombardment from September 11 to 13, the south-west corner of the salient known as the Piton des Mitrailieuses being specially selected for destruction. The enemy's position was occupied during the night 13th-14th, after a skilfully planned and gallant assault, in which the King's Liverpool Regiment and Lancashire Fusiliers specially distinguished themselves. Over 200 Germans were killed in the work, chiefly by bombing, and 71 prisoners were brought in. During the 14th the enemy concentrated from three directions a very heavy artillery fire, and delivered several counter-attacks, which were for the most part broken up under the fire of our guns. Some of the enemy, however, succeeded in forcing an entrance into the work, and severe fighting followed. As hostile reinforcements were increasing in numbers, and as the rocky nature of the ground rendered rapid consolidation difficult, the troops were withdrawn in the evening to their original line, the object of the attack having been accomplished. This withdrawal was conducted with little loss, thanks to the very effective fire of the artillery. During the bombardment and subsequent counter-attack the enemy's losses must have been considerable. On the same front on the night of the 20th-21st, after bombarding the hostile positions on the Crête des Tentes, a strong detachment raided



and bombed the trenches and dug-outs, retiring quickly with little loss. A similar raid was carried out north-east of Doldzeli.

In addition to these operations and raids, constant combats took place between patrols, many prisoners being captured, and several bombing raids were carried out by the Royal Flying Corps.

#### HOLDING THE BULGARIANS.

In order further to assist the progress of our Allies towards Monastir by maintaining such a continuous offensive as would ensure no transference of Bulgarian troops from the Struma front to the west, I now issued instructions for operations on a more extensive scale than those already reported. In accordance with these the General Officer Commanding on that front commenced operations by seizing and holding certain villages on the left bank of the river with a view to enlarging the bridgehead opposite Orljak, whence he would be in a position to threaten a further movement either on Seres or on Demir Hissar. The high ground on the right bank of the river enabled full use to be made of our superiority in artillery, which contributed greatly to the success of these operations. The river itself formed a potential danger, owing to the rapidity with which its waters rise after heavy rain in the mountains; but by the night of September 29 sufficient bridges had been constructed by the Royal Engineers for the passage of all arms. During the night September 29 to 30 the attacking infantry crossed below Orljak bridge and formed up on the left bank.

At dawn on the following morning the Gloucesters and the Cameron Highlanders advanced under cover of an artillery bombardment, and by 8 a.m. had seized the village of Karadjakoi Bala. Shortly after the occupation of the village the enemy opened a heavy and accurate artillery fire; but the remaining two battalions of the brigade, the Royal Scots and Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, though suffering severely

from enfilade fire, pushed on against Karadjakoi Zir. By 5.30 p.m. that village also was occupied, in spite of the stubborn resistance of the enemy. Attempts to bring forward hostile reinforcements were frustrated during the day by our artillery, but during the night the Bulgarians launched several strong counter-attacks, which were repulsed with heavy loss. During the following night determined counter-attacks of the enemy were again repulsed, and by the evening of October 2 the position had been fully consolidated. Preparations were at once made to extend the position by the capture of Yenikoi, an important village on the main Seres road. This operation was successfully carried out by an infantry brigade, composed of the Royal Munster and Royal Dublin Fusiliers, on the morning of October 3, after bombardment by our artillery. By 7 a.m. the village was in our hands. During the day the enemy launched three heavy counter-attacks. The first two were stopped by artillery fire, which caused severe loss. At 4 p.m. the village, the ground in the rear, and the bridges were subjected to an unexpectedly heavy bombardment from several heavy batteries which had hitherto not disclosed their positions. Following on the bombardment was the heaviest counter-attack of the day, six or seven battalions advancing from the direction of Homondos, Kalendra, and Topalova with a view to enveloping our positions. This attack was carried forward with great determination, and some detachments succeeded in entering the northern portion of Yenikoi, where hard fighting continued all night, until fresh reinforcements succeeded in clearing out such enemy as survived. During the following day the consolidation of our new line was continued under artillery fire. On the 5th, after a bombardment, the village of Nevolien was occupied, the Bulgarian garrison retiring on the approach of our infantry. By the following evening the front extended from Komarjan on the right *via* Yenikoi to Elisan on the left. On the 7th a strong reconnaissance by mounted troops located the enemy on the Demir Hissar-Seres railway, with advanced posts approxi-

mately on the line of the Belica stream and a strong garrison in Barakli Djuma. On October 8 our troops had reached the line Agomah-Homondos-Elisan-Ormanli, with the mounted troops on the line Kispeki-Kalendra. The enemy's casualties during these few days were heavy, over 1,500 corpses being counted in the immediate front of the captured localities. Three hundred and seventy-five prisoners and three machine-guns were taken.

#### TRIBUTE TO GENERAL BRIGGS.

I consider that the success of these operations was due to the skill and decision with which they were conducted by Lieutenant-General C. J. Briggs, C.B., and to the excellent co-operation of all arms, which was greatly assisted by the exceptional facilities for observation of artillery fire. The Royal Flying Corps, in spite of the difficulties which they had to overcome and the great strain on their resources, rendered valuable assistance. Armoured motor cars were used with effect.

The peculiar conditions that obtain in this country have called from the Royal Engineers work of an arduous and important kind, demanding the constant application of improvised methods. Road construction and road maintenance have been continuous.

The Ordnance Services have been uniformly satisfactory throughout, and the provision made to satisfy the requirements of the troops, together with the forethought displayed in anticipating these requirements, reflects the greatest credit on the officers of the Army Ordnance Department and all ranks of the Army Ordnance Corps.

The reorganization on a pack scale of this army has necessarily thrown a considerable additional amount of work on the Remount Department, but the task of receiving and forwarding the large number of animals that arrived has been ably coped with, and has proceeded without a hitch.

On the enforcement of martial law the management of the

three lines of railway radiating from Salonika had to be undertaken by the Allies; one line, the Junction-Salonika-Constantinople line, is now entirely administered by the British Army; this, together with the additional railway traffic involved by the arrival of the Serbian Army, as well as the Russian and Italian troops, has thrown a considerable strain on the railway directorate, which, however, has successfully risen to the occasion, and has worked harmoniously and smoothly with the French military and Greek civil officials.

#### MEDICAL SERVICES AND MALARIA.

I desire specially to acknowledge the excellent work rendered by Surgeon-General H. R. Whitehead, C.B., and all ranks of the medical services under his command during a period in which sickness was prevalent. All branches of the Royal Army Medical Corps and the Canadian Army Medical Corps deserve the greatest commendation, and have fully maintained their high traditions of efficiency.

The medical services have been called upon to face problems of great difficulty. It can be easily realized that in a climate varying from severe cold to intense damp heat, and in a mountainous country deficient in water, poorly supplied with roads, without local resources, and where dysentery and malaria are rife, the duties and responsibilities of these services must necessarily be heavy. Experiments as to the most efficacious types of mountain ambulance transport had been conducted in the winter and spring, and as a result travois, mule litters, and cacolets now form integral portions of each field ambulance.

During the same period exhaustive measures were taken for an anti-malarial campaign. Officers with special knowledge were appointed to supervise anti-malarial work; swampy areas were drained, and the defensive lines then held carefully surveyed with a view to only the most healthy portions being held. Although malaria has still been the prevailing disease, yet I feel certain that these careful precautionary measures

have been greatly instrumental in lessening its intensity. The move to the valley of the Struma in June tested all the preparations made, and severely tried the medical resources. The area occupied was found to be highly malarious, the heat intense and damp, and the single road from the base long, hilly, and of uneven surface. The organization of this line of evacuation and the arrangement of halting places and refilling points was, however, successfully undertaken.

The work performed by the Motor Ambulance Convoys was invaluable. From the eastern extremity of the British line of defence evacuation by sea is the only feasible course. Three distinct systems are therefore in operation at one and the same time—by railway, by road, and by sea—all converging on one base.

When active operations commenced, the rôles of the various forms of mountain ambulance transport organized for the field ambulances became apparent. On open hillsides, along the beds of ravines, over slopes covered with scrub, relay parties of stretcher-bearers, travois, litters, and cacolets conveyed the wounded back to the dressing stations.

The advice of the consultant physicians and surgeons, and of the medical experts who have visited this army, has considerably aided in the maintenance of a high standard of technical efficiency. I cannot conclude my remarks on the medical services without paying testimony to the devoted service rendered by the nursing sisters belonging to the various hospitals.

I further wish to thank the British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John for its help and assistance. The Commissioner, Mr. H. L. Fitzpatrick, has been indefatigable in his endeavours for the welfare and comfort of the sick and wounded in both the Base hospitals and the field units.

#### CONTROL OF THE CUSTOMS.

On the declaration of martial law at Salonika on June 3, certain administrative functions had necessarily to be taken

over from the Greeks by the Allies ; amongst these was the control of the Customs, which is now administered by a Greek director working under the supervision of a commission composed of British and French officers directed by French Headquarters. The administration of this important office has been conducted with discretion and common sense.

Finally, I should like to express my warm appreciation of the close co-operation afforded me by Vice-Admirals Sir John de Robeck, K.C.B., and Sir Cecil Thursby, K.C.M.G., and by the officers and men of the Royal Navy under their orders, in all matters connected with both active operations at the mouth of the Struma and in the well-being of the Army. The harmonious relationship that has existed between the two services has greatly assisted combined action. The naval transport officers on the lines of communication have worked untiringly, efficiently, and cordially with their Army colleagues. The Royal Naval Air Service has also afforded me valuable information.

I submit a list of the names of those officers, non-commissioned officers and men whose services I consider deserving of special mention.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient servant,

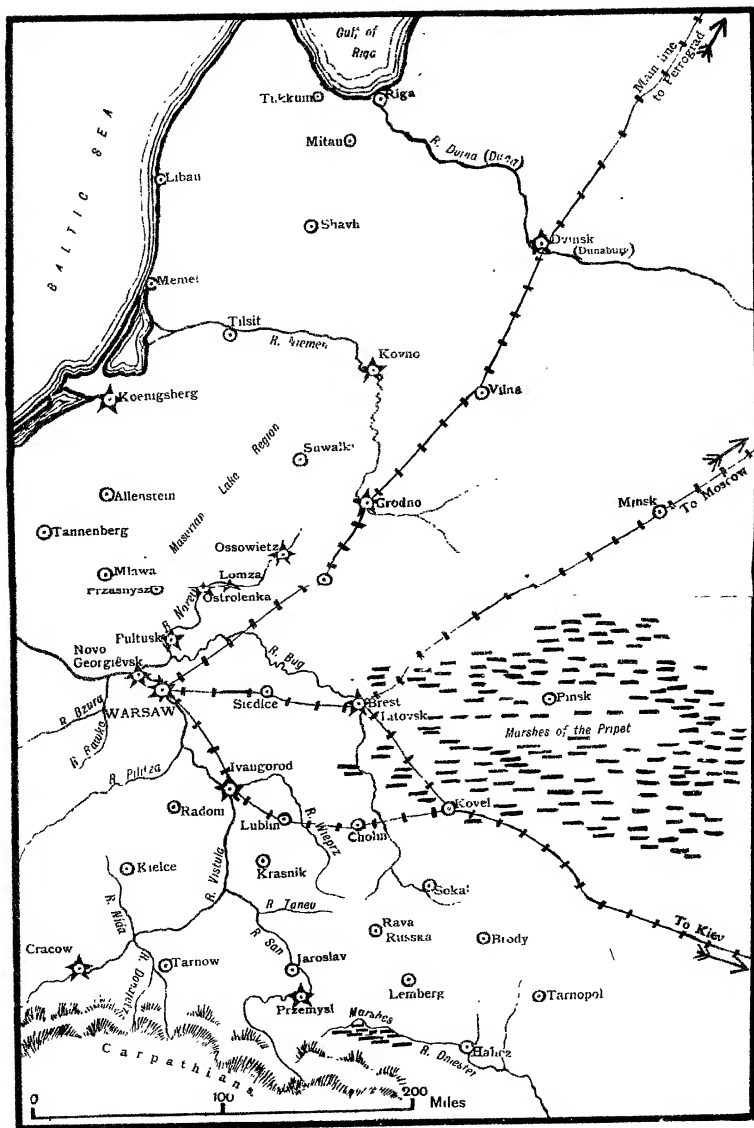
G. F. MILNE, Lieutenant-General,  
Commanding British Salonika Army.



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## 2. The Eastern Theatre of War.

Note Only the chief railways converging from the eastward on Warsaw are shown.